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HUMOROUS ANECDOTES  
ABOUT FAMOUS PEOPLE



# HUMOROUS ANECDOTES ABOUT FAMOUS PEOPLE

BY LEWIS C. HENRY

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## INTRODUCTION

Because of their added charm and human interest, humorous anecdotes about famous people are unequalled for pleasurable reading and for ready use to brighten one's conversation, speeches, and writings. In this new selection of the best jokes and stories told by and about prominent persons and noted wits the reader will find a thousand laughs for all occasions.

Here you will be entertained by the sparkling stories of Mark Twain, John Barrymore, Dr. Samuel Johnson, W. C. Fields, Abraham Lincoln, G. K. Chesterton, Charles Lamb, George Ade, Whistler, Oscar Wilde, Monty Woolley, Disraeli, George M. Cohan, Douglas Jerrold, George Bernard Shaw, P. T. Barnum, Alexander Woollcott, George Sand, Ilka Chase, Talleyrand, Oscar Levant—and many others.

Here are the best anecdotes, jokes, and stories told by and about famous actors, artists, authors, clergymen, doctors, lawyers, orators, musicians, politicians, and others. Here are the best humorous stories told by famous persons on such favorite and perennial topics as boasting, bores, children, drinking, fishing, fools, love, marriage, music, politics, relatives, women, and many other interesting subjects. All these anecdotes about personalities and these stories of wit and humor are arranged by subjects for greater reading enjoyment and for more convenient reference. Additional classifications to aid the reader in selecting the right story to use at the right time will be found in the *Index of Subjects*, printed at the end of the book. An *Index of Famous People*, giving biographical information about the men and women referred to in this book, is also included.



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## ACTORS AND PLAYWRIGHTS

A man with a frighteningly desperate look in his eyes managed to gain entrance to producer Oscar Hammerstein's private office. When Hammerstein had satisfied himself that the man was harmless, he listened patiently to what he had to say.

"I will perform an act on your stage," the man said, "that will be the talk of the world. You can advertise it in advance and can sell tickets to it for at least one hundred dollars apiece.

"Now here is my proposition: If you will put fifty thousand dollars in escrow for my wife, I'll go on your stage, and in full view of your audience plunge a dagger into my heart."

Hammerstein thought a moment.

"Marvelous," he said, "and then what will you do for an encore?"

An actor, not famed for his modesty, was discussing his art with Sir James Barrie, the dramatist.

"I can convey anything to my audience without speaking a single word."

"Then," said Sir James, "please express without a word that you have a younger brother, who was born in Devonshire but is now living in Kent, who is coming to London next week on Thursday to call on his sister who has sprained her ankle crossing Piccadilly as she was on her way to a Regent Street dressmaker to be fitted for a pink silk dress."

The actor's reply has never been recorded.

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When the first act of a play in which he was starring was repeatedly punctuated by outbursts of coughing, John Barrymore prepared himself for any further epidemics. When the second act was likewise interrupted by spasms of coughing, the resourceful Mr. Barrymore reached inside his coat and pulled out a large fish.

"Here you damned walruses," he shouted, tossing the fish into the audience, "busy yourselves with this, while we go on with the play."

The renowned actress, Sarah Bernhardt, was touring America with a series of French plays. Her Denver audience seemed to her to be very unresponsive. Enraged, she exclaimed in the interval between the first and second acts:

"Ze play ees *Fédora*, ze artiste ees Bernhardt, and ze audience ees *Les Misérables!*"

Early in his theatrical career, Victor Moore was assigned the role of a villain who had to shoot the hero's father. At the crucial moment, after the proper dramatic build-up, he impetuously pulled out the revolver, took aim, and pulled the trigger. Not a sound—but the titters from the audience. The poor victim didn't know whether to collapse or not, and stood there indecisively teetering back and forth. Then the villainous Victor took a knife and rushed up to his foe and stabbed him, just at the same moment that someone in the wings, his cues a trifle mixed, helpfully fired a gun.

"And that," says Moore, "settled my career. I became a comedian."

Alexander Woollcott invited Harpo Marx to spend the weekend at his country house in Vermont. Harpo drove up in a broken-down Model-T Ford, a twenty-five-year-old derelict with tattered side-curtains and accordion-pleated fenders.

Woolcott stood transfixed by the spectacle. "What in Heaven's name," he demanded, "is that?"

"This?" replied Harpo. "Oh, this is my town car."

"What town?" asked the host. "Pompeii?"

Critics are not as a rule very popular with actors. But George M. Cohan always said that there was one critic that he would take his hat off to.

The critic was attending a new play that started off badly and rapidly got worse. After the first act many left the theater; at the end of the second, most of the others started putting on their coats. The critic rose from his fifth row seat, turned and faced the auditorium, and raised restraining hands.

"Stop!" he commanded in a stern voice. "Women and children first!"

A conversation between Sir James Barrie, author of *Peter Pan* and many other plays, and a new acquaintance turned quite naturally to the playwright's works.

"Sir James," the man said, "I suppose some of your plays do better than others. I imagine not all are successes, are they?"

"Oh, no," Barrie hastily assured him. "Some Peter out and others Pan out."

John Barrymore was once rehearsing a new play and got embroiled in a slight altercation with his leading lady. After a few pleasantries had been tossed back and forth, the Great Profile made some rather uncomplimentary remarks on the actress's parentage. Infuriated, she swept off the stage and delivered her parting shot.

"Please remember," she snapped, "that I am a lady."

"Madam," retorted Barrymore suavely, "I will respect your secret."

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Mrs. Patrick Campbell happened to meet Mrs. Leslie Carter in a New York theater backstage after an opening. Since the two actresses chose to regard each other as strangers Alexander Woollcott felt called upon to introduce them to each other.

Mrs. Patrick Campbell exclaimed in her most queenly manner, "Honored, honored," and then she turned to Mr. Woolcott but still held Mrs. Leslie Carter's hand. In her most effective stage whisper she added, "I thought she was dead."

Sacha Guitry, the famous French actor, was approached by a friend and asked to listen to a young American girl recite who had theatrical ambitions. The actor consented and the girl declaimed several passages from classical tragedy for him.

When she had finished, M. Guitry went up to her and patted her on the head.

"My dear child," he said, "marry soon."

The story is told of William Gillette that when he was a young actor he appeared in a play which contained a pathetic deathbed scene. However, Gillette did not play it to the manager's satisfaction.

"You are ridiculous," exclaimed the indignant producer. "Why, you actually laughed when you are supposed to be dying!"

"At the salary you pay," retorted the actor, "death is something to be greeted cheerfully."

When a new play by Alexandre Dumas was performed in Paris without notable success, an acquaintance accosted the author backstage.

"Well, aren't you pleased?" asked the celebrity hunter.

"Yes," replied Dumas, "but not as pleased as you are."

After the première of *Pygmalion*, the applause of the audience called Bernard Shaw, the author, out on the stage.

As the applause died down a voice from the gallery called out, "The play is no good!"

Shaw, looking up at his critic, retorted, "I quite agree with you, my friend, but who are we against so many?"

Not only did Edwin Booth, the tragedian, have a broken nose, but it was broken in such a way as to cause people to look three and even four times at it.

After one performance a lady came backstage to see him.

"I like your acting, Mr. Booth," she said, "but, to be perfectly frank with you—I just can't get over your nose."

"Small wonder," he agreed, "the bridge is gone."

When P. T. Barnum was running his museum in New York, he found that people would pay admission and stay for hours, drifting from room to room, thus preventing newcomers from getting in. He therefore placed a sign over a door and the patrons, expecting a new curiosity, went through the door in droves and, before they knew it, found themselves out in the street.

The sign read:

TO THE EGRESS.

The annoyance that all theater-goers experience all too frequently came to plague the painter Whistler one evening as he sat in a stall at the West End Theater. His neighbor, a lady of not inconsiderable girth, made frequent trips to the lobby. It was at about the seventh excursion that Whistler's patience broke.

"Madam," he said as she squeezed past, "I trust I do not incommoded you by keeping my seat."

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A gentleman said to Mrs. Siddons, the famous actress, that he supposed that applause was necessary to actors as it gave them confidence.

"More," she replied, "it gives us breath."

The musical comedy star, June Havoc, was once taken to tea at the Columbia University Faculty Club. Looking around the room at the aged occupants, the beauteous Miss Havoc sighed:

"My, my, I've never been with such a lot of extinguished gentlemen before in all my life."

It is well known, that most versatile comedienne, Beatrice Lillie, is in private life, Lady Peel. One season, when a show she was in was playing in Chicago, Miss Lillie had some dresses made at a famous couturier's. As she was being fitted, a member of a leading meat packing family was waiting outside the fitting-room and made her displeasure known in no uncertain terms.

"How long is that actress going to be in there?" she trumpeted.

Miss Lillie quite rightly took her own time and then tripped lightly out of the fitting-room, saying to the fitter well within the irate dowager's hearing, "Tell that butcher's wife that Lady Peel is finished now."

When someone asked the playwright, George S. Kaufman what he thought of a certain play (*not* one of his own), he replied:

"It's really not quite fair for me to say as I saw it under peculiarly unfortunate circumstances. The curtain was up."

An actor, dining at the same table with the English wit, Douglas Jerrold, was complaining that he suffered intensely from brain fever.

"Courage, courage, my good fellow," retorted Jerrold. "Depend upon it, there is no foundation for it."

Mrs. Patrick Campbell was rehearsing one of Bernard Shaw's plays. The author was sitting in the front row and was all too vocal in his criticisms of the acting. Finally, Mrs. Campbell, infuriated by the dramatist, was overheard by another actor to mutter under her breath.

"That old man with the beard! He knows nothing! Nothing!"

"Surely," exclaimed the actor, "you don't mean Mr. Shaw!"

The actress turned and fumed in reply, "So he calls himself."

G. K. Chesterton, who weighed over three hundred pounds and was over six feet tall, devoted most of his literary industry to novels and essays. When he finally wrote a drama, his fellow playwright, George Bernard Shaw, referred to it as "Fatty's First Play."

Ferenc Molnar, the dramatist, has always been a late-riser. Once, back in Budapest, he was called as a witness in a law-case. Unfortunately, the case was scheduled for nine in the morning and it took the combined efforts of two servants to get him up and dressed in time. As he left his house at eight-thirty and saw all the people in the streets, hurrying to work, he stood transfixed in astonishment.

"Great heavens!" he exclaimed. "Are all these people witnesses in this fool case!"

Years ago, George Bernard Shaw was at a party where many of the guests were dancing, including a particularly awkward couple. The gyrations of the latter were watched with awe by many

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present, and one of the onlookers called Shaw's attention to the pair.

"Did you ever see, Mr. Shaw, such horrible dancing?"

"Oh, that!" scoffed Shaw. "That's not dancing. That's the New Ethical Movement!"

A servant once ushered the actor Samuel Foote and his two daughters into a drawing room and announced the leading English comedian of his day in these terms: "Mr. Foote and the two—cr—er—the two Misses Feet!"

Lord Byron was attending a performance of one of his tragedies, when, during an intermission, a loud, harsh, grating sound was heard coming from behind the curtain.

"Ah," said the imperturbable author, "they're cutting out the third act."

A certain playwright was boasting to Douglas Jerrold that he was never nervous on the first night of one of his plays.

"Well, you have no need to be," replied Jerrold. "You are always certain of success since you never plagiarize from failures."

Mrs. Minnie Maddern Fiske, the actress, was having her hair dressed backstage, when her young hairdresser remarked:

"I should have went on the stage!"

"But," said Mrs. Fiske, "look at me—how I've had to work and study to gain what success I have!"

"Oh yes," replied the young woman, "but then I have talent."

Beerbohm Tree was discussing terms with an actor whom he was quite anxious to get for his company. The man came to call while Tree was making-up in his dressing-room before a matinée.



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"How much would you want?" asked Tree.

"Well," answered the actor, "at least fifty pounds a week."

Tree went on making-up and without turning from his mirror said, casually:

"Don't slam the door when you go out, will you?"

John Barrymore had just finished ordering several articles in a haberdashery. After checking the order to make sure that he had everything, the clerk asked where the items were to be sent. Barrymore gave him the address and turned to leave.

"And your name, please?" the salesman called after him.

"Barrymore," said the Great Profile in a tone that would have made a weaker man hang his head in shame for not knowing.

"Which Barrymore, please?" persisted the man.

"Ethel," Barrymore barked.

General Burgoyne once attended the theater for the first performance of a new tragedy. At the end of the first act more than thirty characters had been introduced into the piece and the General in common with most of the audience was beginning to be a little confused by the plot.

At intermission, as he was strolling in the corridors, he happened to meet the author, who of course asked the General's opinion of the play.

"What rank do you have in the army, sir?" asked the General in reply.

The poet looked puzzled.

"Because," went on the General, "if you are not at least a Lieutenant-Colonel, you will never be able to conduct so numerous an army to the end of the piece."

Mrs. Patrick Campbell, the actress, was rehearsing the leading role in *Pygmalion* in the presence of the author, George Bernard

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Shaw. Although Mrs. Campbell made the role famous, at the beginning she and Shaw did not see eye to eye on the interpretation and the Irish dramatist was outspoken in his criticism of her playing. Finally in exasperation the actress stopped in her tracks and fixed the vegetarian Shaw with a glittering eye.

"Some day," she said acidly, "you'll eat a pork chop, Joey, and then God help all women!"

When Roger Kemble heard that his daughter had married an actor he was furious.

"Haven't I warned you repeatedly against marrying a member of the worst profession in the world?" he shouted.

"But you're an actor, father," she pointed out, "and the man I married is a member of your own company."

"That doesn't make a bit of difference," he spluttered, "and besides, you chose just about the worst performer in my entire company."

"Exactly," she agreed triumphantly, "nobody can call *him* an actor."

When an actor has money, he doesn't send letters but telegrams.

*Anton Chekhov*

## AGE

While strolling down Pennsylvania Avenue one afternoon, the late Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, then in his eighty-sixth year,

was engaged in deep and earnest conversation with a friend. Suddenly he stopped in the middle of a sentence and the friend, following his gaze, saw that he was looking at a very beautiful young girl who was crossing the street.

The Justice resumed the conversation with a sigh. "Oh, to be eighty again," he murmured.

A young man, of more courage than sense, determined to "bait the bear" in the person of Doctor Samuel Johnson. At dinner he remarked to the Doctor:

"Now, Doctor Johnson, do not look so glum. Be a little gay and lively, like the others."

The Doctor stared at him as much as to say 'who is this creature?' But the young man went on:

"What would you give, old gentleman, to be as young and sprightly as I am?"

"Why, sir," replied Johnson, "I think I would almost be content to be as foolish."

The Prince de Conti, who had been noted throughout Europe as a breaker of hearts, complained in his old age:

"It must be time for me to retire. Formerly my civilities were taken as declarations of love, but now my declarations of love are taken only for civilities."

In interviewing the actor, Richard Mansfield, a newspaperman asked:

"You've had a long and remarkable experience, Mr. Mansfield. Can't you just reminisce a little and give me a few anecdotes?"

"Yes," was the reply, "I've had a good many experiences; but I hope that I have not yet reached my anecdotage."

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Once a Roman lady said to Cicero that she was 30 years of age. "It must be true," said the statesman, "since you have maintained it for twenty."

The old believe everything: the middle-aged suspect everything: the young know everything.

*Oscar Wilde*

## ANCESTRY

Abraham Lincoln was confronted one afternoon by a rather large woman who was quite prominent in society and who was chairman of many women's clubs.

"Mr. President," she began in a tone that indicated she was not accustomed to taking *no* for an answer, "You must give me a colonel's commission for my son. I demand it not as a favor, but as a right."

Then she recounted her family's past deeds.

"My grandfather fought at Lexington," she said. "My uncle was the only man who did not run away at Bladensburg. My father fought at New Orleans, and my dear husband was killed at Monterey."

"Perhaps, madam," Lincoln said softly, "your family has done enough for the country. It is time to give somebody else a chance."

Elihu Root was discussing Theodore Roosevelt's family.

"You would think," he remarked, "that the children were continually saying their prayers. Everything they say begins 'Our Father.'"

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The son of a certain bishop called on Joseph Choate, the diplomat, at his office in Washington. Choate, being very busy, asked him to have a chair, and he would attend to him presently. The boy impatiently objected to being put off.

"But, Mr. Choate," he complained, "perhaps you don't understand. I'm the son of Bishop Blank!"

"Oh," said Mr. Choate, brightly, "in that case have *two* chairs!"

During Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations, Queen Liliukalani of Hawaii visited the British Queen at Windsor. During the Royal tête-à-tête, the Hawaiian Queen happened to remark that she had English blood in her veins.

"How so?" asked Victoria.

"One of my ancestors ate Captain Cook," was the reply.

Robert E. Lee was visiting a distant relative's family and talking to the young son, who was conspicuous by a lack of all ambition and a plenitude of self-indulgence.

"Young man," remarked the General, "you must be very fond of your mother,—you're so considerate of her son."

A mule has neither pride of ancestry nor hope of posterity.

*Robert G. Ingersoll*

## ANGER

Edwin McMasters Stanton, Secretary of War under Lincoln, was well known for a highly inflammable temper. The pressure of war

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business and a swarm of annoyances tended to keep his nerves frayed and his tongue sharp. When he complained to Lincoln that a major general had accused him of favoritism the President suggested he pen a sharp rejoinder.

"Prick him hard!" Lincoln urged.

Mr. Stanton, bolstered by this strong support, wrote hurriedly and with venom couched in every word. As he read the letter aloud to the President, the latter interrupted with frequent enthusiastic bravos such as:

"Right! Just it! Score him deeply! That's first rate, Stanton!"

When Stanton started to fold the letter, preparatory to inserting it in the envelope, Lincoln asked, "What are you going to do with it now?"

The Secretary said he was going to mail it, of course.

"Nonsense," snorted the President, "you don't want to send that letter. Put it in the stove! That's the way I do when I have written a letter while I am angry. You've had a good time writing that letter, and feel better. Now write another."

When angry, count four; when very angry, swear.

*Mark Twain*

## ARMY

Major General Smedley Butler during a battle in Northern France stopped a soldier who was running towards the rear.

"Don't you know there's a big battle going on up front?" he asked the frightened soldier.

"Y-y-yes, I-I-I know."

"Then what are you doing here?"

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The soldier looked sheepish but did not reply.

"Here, don't you know who I am?" asked the irritated officer. "I'm your general."

"Good God! Am I that far back?" exclaimed the soldier and fainted away.

General John J. Pershing was reviewing some troops in France. Pausing before a doughboy who wore three wound stripes on his arms, the general felt that a little comradely conversation would not be out of place.

"Well, my lad," asked the Commander-in-Chief pointing to the stripes, "where did you get those?"

"From the supply sergeant, sir," was the reply.

When Marshal Foch, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Armies in the First World War, visited America in 1921, he was greeted by all the celebrities of the day. Among the meetings arranged was one with Babe Ruth.

The Marshal spoke little English and the Babe no French. They clasped hands. The cameras were ready to record the moment; the newshawks were ready with pads and pencils to record the words for posterity. There was a long pause. It seemed as if the meeting might peter out in inarticulate embarrassment.

Finally, the Babe grinned and asked politely, "You were in the war, weren't you?"

"*Oui, oui*," replied the Marshal, and the moment was saved.

During the campaign in Poland, Napoleon took up his quarters in a country house where some of the officers of a captured Russian company were brought before him. Their attitude to their conqueror was anything but humble and one of them took the opportunity of

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saying that the Russian was superior to the Frenchman in every way.

"We Russians, for instance, fight for honor; you French fight only for gain!"

"You are quite right," replied Napoleon. "Each fights for that which he does not possess."

General Israel Putnam was addressing some new recruits in the Revolutionary Army and saying that he only wanted willing fighters.

"Now, boys, if there are any of you who are dissatisfied and who want to return home, they can step six paces out in front of the line." Then, after a pause, he added, "But I'll shoot the first man that *does* step out."

Fully realizing that the Union soldiers were forced to fight under appalling conditions most of the time, President Lincoln was disposed to treat absent-without-leave cases that were brought to his attention with a good deal of leniency.

"If the good Lord has given a man a cowardly pair of legs," he reasoned, "it is difficult to keep them from running away with him."

General George B. McClellan, in command of the Union forces in the early part of the Civil War, seemed to be conducting an over-cautious campaign in the eyes of some. So indecisive was he that President Lincoln finally lost patience and sent him a letter.

"My dear McClellan," the note read, "If you don't want to use the Army I should like to borrow it for a while. Yours respectfully, A. Lincoln."

A messenger came to President Lincoln with the news that a wagontrain of army provisions had been surprised by an ambush



of Confederate troops a short way across the Potomac and that a brigadier general had been taken prisoner.

"Did they capture the train?" inquired the President.

"No, sir, the regiment came up and saved it; but the general, Mr. President, is a prisoner."

"Oh, never mind that," replied Lincoln, drily. "I can make a dozen generals in a day, but mules cost three hundred dollars apiece."

Someone asked President Lincoln how many men comprised the Confederate armies.

"Well, according to the best authorities," replied Lincoln, "about twelve hundred thousand."

"Great Heavens," exclaimed the man, "what a tremendous army!"

"Yes, it is," said Lincoln, "but there's no doubt of its size. All of our generals when they get beaten say that the enemy outnumbers them three to one. We have four hundred thousand men in the field and three times four makes twelve, doesn't it?"

When President Lincoln was about to sign a pardon for a deserter, he looked up from his desk and remarked:

"I'm overdoing this pardoning business. Did you ever hear how Patagonians eat oysters? No? They open them and throw the shells out of the window till the shells get higher than the house; then they move. I think of it often nowadays."

One of Lincoln's generals had succeeded in having his pet strategic maneuver put into operation. But the plan backfired. Now he found that he needed many more men and much more material than he had counted on. When he explained the situation to Lincoln, the latter told him the following story:

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"In early days," he said, "a party of men went out hunting for a wild boar. But the game came upon them unawares, and they, scampering away, climbed trees, all save one, who seizing the animal by the ears, undertook to hold him. After holding him for some time and finding his strength giving way, he cried out to his companions in the trees:

" 'Boys, come down and help me let go!' "

When Lincoln visited the front several weeks after the battle of Antietam he wondered why McClellan's army was still kept idle. Standing at the top of a hill from which he could view the battleground, Lincoln turned to his friend, O. M. Hatch, of Illinois, and pointing to the men sprawled comfortably on the ground, asked:

"Hatch, Hatch, what is all this?"

"Why," replied Hatch, "that is the Army of the Potomac."

"Are you sure," drawled the President, "that it isn't General McClellan's bodyguard?"

P. T. Barnum, the famous impresario and manager of the mid-gets, General Tom Thumb and Commodore Nutt, paid a visit to President Lincoln during a lull in the Civil War. When the progress of the war was mentioned, the President smiled rather wanly.

"You have some pretty small generals, Mr. Barnum," he observed, "but I think I can beat you."

When the French writer, Edmond About, was serving his term in the army, he and a friend of his were sitting at the barracks gate one day when a small boy passed by leading a donkey.

About tells that he asked the child: "Why do you hold onto your brother so tightly, *mon petit*?"

"So he won't join the army," the boy quickly retorted.

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Prince Eugene, the Austrian general, was showing off his crack troops of ten thousand cuirassiers to the English Ambassador, the Earl of Cadogan.

"My lord," the prince asked haughtily, "have you in England any ten thousand horse troops that could beat these?"

"I don't know, Excellency," replied Cadogan, "but I know that any five thousand would try."

During one of the wars between France and England, the King of England, William III, was in conference with several of his officers. One of the colonels asked him what the next move of the English fleet would be.

"Can you keep a secret?" asked the King.

"Most assuredly, Your Majesty," replied the colonel with a bow.

"And so can I!" retorted the King, and the conference was terminated.

## ART AND ARTISTS

The French artist, Honoré Daumier, in his youth was, like so many artists, inclined to be somewhat lax in his rent. One day his landlord was very insistent in his demands when Daumier said to him:

"Look here, my friend, the time will come when people will visit this miserable hole and say 'Daumier, the artist, once painted here!'"

The landlord was unimpressed. "If you don't pay your rent now," he retorted, "they'll be able to say it tomorrow."

The Fine Arts class had assembled in the auditorium of the Fogg Museum at Harvard when Correggio's "Leda and the Swan" was

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flashed on the screen for classroom discussion. Professor Charles Eliot Norton was discussing the composition, line and symmetry of the painting when a Freshman in the back of the hall piped up:

"Well, what's she doing with that damn duck, anyway?"

Someone once mentioned to Samuel Goldwyn, the movie magnate, that his wife had very beautiful hands.

"Yes," said Mr. Goldwyn, "as a matter of fact, I'm thinking of having a bust made of them."

The famous English painter, Turner, was showing Baron Houghton some of his most recent pictures.

"I must admit," said Turner, as they came to one of the famous sunsets, "that when I started on this I had no idea what it was going to be."

The nobleman inspected the picture gravely, then turned to the artist and said, "And when you finished, how did you find out what it was?"

Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield and Prime Minister of Britain, was discussing the lack of great architects in England at the time.

"No profession," he said, "has done its duty in England until it has furnished a victim; even our boasted navy has never achieved a victory until we shot an admiral. That is what is wanted in architecture . . . Suppose an architect were hanged. Terror has its inspiration, as well as competition."

The famous British artist, Sir Joshua Reynolds, was once looking over some drawings at a second-hand picture dealer's.

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"What do you ask for this?" he asked, holding up an old yellowed sketch.

"Twenty guineas, your honor," replied the dealer.

"Twenty pence, I suppose you mean?"

"No, sir. It is true that this morning I would have taken twenty pence for it, but if you think it worth looking at, all the world will think it worth buying."

Sir Joshua bought the sketch for twenty guineas.

A nobleman, an amateur of the arts and an enthusiastic painter, showed some of his work to the painter, Turner.

Turner examined the pictures for a while and then turned to the nobleman.

"My lord," he said, "you lack nothing but poverty to become an excellent painter."

Enrico Caruso was very proud of his talent as a cartoonist, and a compliment to his skill with the pencil gave him much more satisfaction than all the bouquets tossed to him for his remarkable voice. He was, therefore, very disappointed when Mark Twain failed to invite him to a dinner that the author once gave in New York in honor of eminent cartoonists.

"Perhaps," remarked Caruso plaintively, "he only knows me as a tenor."

A rich society woman said somewhat coyly to John Singer Sargent as he started on her portrait: "I hope you will make a flattering likeness of me."

"Rest assured, madam," replied the painter. "Why, you won't know yourself."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Samuel F. B. Morse, the inventor of telegraphy, was an eminent painter in his earlier years. He once painted a picture of a man in the throes of death and asked a physician friend to examine it.

"Well?" Morse inquired after the doctor had examined the picture.

The physician removed his glasses, turned to Morse and exclaimed, "Malaria!"

*There once was a madame called Tussaud  
Who loved the grand folk in "Who's Who" so,  
That she made them in wax,  
Both their fronts and their backs,  
And asked no permission to do so.*

Sir Edward Landseer, the famous English painter of animals, was visiting in the country, when at a nearby farm he noticed a fine bull that he immediately decided to paint. The farmer was delighted to have his animal reproduced on canvas and watched the progress of the work with great interest.

The following year, when the artist revisited the place he told the farmer that the picture of his bull had brought six hundred pounds.

"The Lord have mercy on me!" exclaimed the astonished farmer. "Why I would have sold the bull himself for less than a hundred!"

An old miser asked the English painter, William Hogarth, to paint a representation of the destruction of Pharaoh's armies in the Red Sea, but he offered such a ridiculous fee that Hogarth refused. After much haggling, they finally came to a price half-way between Hogarth's regular fee and what the miser originally offered. The only stipulation that Hogarth made was that he should be paid in advance. The miser reluctantly agreed and counted out the money.

Some weeks later the picture was delivered to him. His amaze-

ment and chagrin knew no bounds when he discovered, within a frame, a simple square of canvas painted red all over. Furious, he called on Hogarth for an explanation.

"What's the matter?" asked Hogarth blandly. "Don't you like your picture?"

"Why," fumed the miser, "you've cheated me! Where are the Israelites?"

"Oh, they've all gone over."

"And where are the Egyptians?"

"They have all drowned!"

*When Sir Joshua Reynolds died  
All Nature was degraded;  
The King dropped a tear into the Queen's ear,  
And all his pictures faded.*

*William Blake*

The American portraitist, Gilbert Stuart, was well-known to be a great braggart. One time when Isaac Hull was sitting for his portrait, Stuart was boasting of his great success in England—how Marquess This and Baron That favored him with their patronage.

Mrs. Stuart, not knowing that there was a sitter in the studio, suddenly interrupted this monologue by bursting into the room with her apron on and crying out:

"Do you want that leg of mutton boiled or roasted?"

Stuart, with great presence of mind, replied, "Ask your mistress."

*Sir Christopher Wren  
Said, "I am going to dine with some men.  
If anybody calls  
Say I am designing St. Paul's."*

*E. C. Bentley*

### Stories About Whistler

Sir Henry Irving was very pleased when someone gave him a Whistler etching as a birthday gift. Some time later he gave his reactions to it after he had feverishly unwrapped the package and looked at the etching at arm's length.

"Of course I was delighted," he related, "for I was a great admirer of the artist as well as a personal friend of the man, but when I started to hang the etching I was puzzled. I couldn't for the life of me tell which was the top and which the bottom. Finally, after reversing the picture half a dozen times and finding it looked equally well either way up, I decided to try an experiment.

"I invited Whistler to dine with me and seated him opposite his picture. During dinner he glanced at it from time to time; between the soup and the fish he put up his eyeglasses and squinted at it; between the roast and the dessert he got up and walked over to take a closer view of it; finally, by the time we reached the coffee, he had discovered what the trouble was.

"'Why, Henry,' he said reproachfully, 'you've hung my etching upside down.'"

"'Indeed!' I said. 'Well, my friend, it has taken you an hour to discover it!'"

The famous portrait of Sarasate, "Black on Black," stood at the end of a long corridor in Whistler's London studio.

Putting his hand on the shoulder of Frederick Keppel, the connoisseur, who was looking at the picture with him, Whistler said, "Now, isn't it beautiful?"

"It certainly is," was the reply.

"But isn't it *beautiful*?" persisted Whistler.

"It is, indeed," answered Keppel, reverently.

The painter threw his hands in the air and shouted, "Damn it, man! Isn't it BEAUTIFUL?"



The startled Mr. Keppel was equal to the occasion, however. "All right, damn it, it is!" he shouted back.

All was serene after that.

Sir Morell Mackenzie, the noted English throat specialist, received an urgent call from the home of Whistler one blustery evening. He hurried the five miles to Whistler's residence, puffed his way out of his heavy clothing and prepared to treat the patient—to his surprise, Whistler's French poodle.

The good doctor suppressed his indignation and treated the animal. His slightly higher than exorbitant fee, however, graphically illustrated his feelings in the case.

It was only three days later that Whistler was notified that Dr. Mackenzie wanted to see him immediately concerning an urgent matter. Whistler virtually flew to the doctor's home. As he came rushing up the steps Dr. Mackenzie opened the door for him, pointed to it and said, "How long do you think it will take you to paint my front door, Mr. Whistler?"

One of Whistler's acquaintances came back to town after visiting in the country and described to him in glowing terms the magnificence of Nature at that time of year.

"And the most wonderful part," she concluded, "is that I was continually reminded of your paintings everywhere I looked."

"Yes," mused Whistler, "even dear old Mother Nature is beginning to learn the art."

At times Whistler could be severely critical of his students' efforts. It was during one of these trying periods that a woman student broke slightly and protested, "Mr. Whistler, is there any reason why I shouldn't paint things as I see them?"

"Well, there is no law against it that I know of," he replied, "but

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the dreadful moment will dawn when you will see things as you paint them."

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the poet, once asked Whistler to voice an opinion of a sketch upon which the former had been working for quite some time.

Whistler suggested that it had its points and work on it should be continued.

A month or so later when Whistler again visited his friend he asked Rossetti how he was getting along.

"I'm quite pleased with the progress I'm making," said Rossetti. "In fact I like it so much I've ordered an exquisite frame for it."

When the picture was framed Whistler again came to see it and ventured, "You've done nothing to it since I last saw it, have you?"

"No, I haven't," replied Rossetti, "but I have composed a sonnet on the subject. Here, I'll recite it for you."

After the recitation Whistler looked up at the beautiful frame and said, "Perhaps you'd better replace that picture with the sonnet."

In one version of the strained relations that existed between Whistler and Oscar Wilde, the origin was traced to an incident where Wilde asked Whistler to give his opinion upon a poem that the former had written.

Whistler read the poem and handed it back without saying anything. But Wilde insisted upon a comment.

"Do you see any worth in it?" he asked.

"Yes, I do," replied Whistler, eyeing the small sheet of thin onion-skin paper, "I should say it is worth its weight in gold."

Whistler was the president of the newly-organized Royal Society after it received its Charter. The Prince of Wales, whose support

Whistler had elicited in the Society's behalf, honored the gallery with a visit and was of course met by Whistler at the door.

As the Prince started on his tour of inspection he commented, "I never heard of this place, Mr. Whistler, until you brought it to my attention. What is its history?"

"It has none, your Highness," replied Whistler. "Its history dates from today."

During a discussion over the merits of Velasquez, Whistler and an English painter rose to high words. In the course of the argument Whistler praised himself extravagantly.

"It's a good thing we can't see ourselves as others see us," exclaimed the Briton caustically.

"Isn't it, though?" rejoined Whistler, softly. "I know in my case I should grow intolerably conceited."

An acquaintance was describing to Whistler a scene he had encountered in his travels.

"There was a boatload of Egyptians," he recounted, "floating down the Nile with the thermometer one hundred and twenty degrees in the shade, and no shade."

"And no thermometer," interrupted Whistler.

To an overnight millionaire, art was just another way to display one's wealth. Consequently when he went to Whistler's Paris studio his demeanor was overbearing and he evinced little or no interest in the paintings themselves.

After he had looked at most of the works, the millionaire waved his arm grandly and asked in a very business-like tone, "How much for the whole lot?"

"Four millions," snapped Whistler.

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"What!" shouted the man, letting his cigar fall from his lips.

"That is my posthumous price," said Whistler, "Good morning!"

A frequent visitor to Whistler's home began to show an increasing tendency to find petty faults with the artist's work.

One evening the visitor looked at Whistler's latest effort, shook his head slowly from side to side, and said, "This picture is not up to your usual standard; it is not good this time."

To which Whistler promptly replied, "You shouldn't say it is not good. You should say you do not like it, and then, you know, you are perfectly safe. Now come and have something you do like—have some whisky."

A rather severe lady seemed shocked as she peered intently at a picture on the wall of Whistler's studio.

Turning to Whistler, she demanded, "Isn't that picture indecent?"

"No, madam," was the reply, "but your question is."

Accompanied by Horne, his framer, Whistler visited an exhibition to inspect one of his paintings.

"Well, Horne," he asked, "What do you think of it?"

"It's superb," cried Horne ecstatically, "Simply superb. Mr. Smythe has one exactly like it."

"What!" snapped the amazed Whistler. "A picture like this?"

"Oh, no," answered Horne, "not the picture—the frame."

With an air of reckless indifference Mark Twain approached a canvas that Whistler had almost finished. As he drew close to the picture he moved his hand near a cloud effect and with a motion

as if to rub it out, murmured, "A lovely picture except for this cloud. If I were you I'd do away with it."

Whistler protested vehemently. "Gad, sir!" he cried, "Do be careful there. Don't you see the paint is not yet dry?"

"Oh, that's quite all right," replied Mark Twain, "I'm wearing gloves."

Even though Whistler took teaching very seriously he also believed that a bit of humor relieved the pressure and monotony in the classroom.

He apparently thought the students' interest was lagging one lazy afternoon for suddenly he rapped for attention and asked, "Do you know what I mean when I say tone, value, light, shade, quality, movement, construction, etc.?"

The class chorused as with one voice, "Oh, yes, Mr. Whistler!"

"I'm glad then," sighed Whistler in a relieved tone, "For it's more than I do myself."

Although the painter, Whistler, could pick and choose his commissions after he became the rage of the fashionable world, his habits of life were never such as to encourage thrift. The money came and the money went, but the creditors only came.

Once, when he met Disraeli, then Prime Minister of Great Britain, in Piccadilly, Disraeli took his arm and walked with him for a few steps.

"Ah," said Whistler to the Prime Minister, "if my creditors could only see me now!"

Benrimo, the author of the Chinese play, *The Yellow Jacket*, was visiting in London for the first time when, upon coming out of the Burlington Gallery, he spied Whistler. Although he had never met the artist, he walked directly up to him and launched into an ex-

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cited acclamation of Whistler's work. The painter was obviously pleased with the young Californian's eulogy. Then he pointed with his cane to the famous gallery and asked:

"Been in there?"

"Oh, yes!"

"See anything worthwhile?"

"Some splendid things, magnificent examples of——"

"I'm sorry you ever approved of me!" snapped Whistler as he turned on his heel and walked away.

*There is a young artist called Whistler,  
Who in every respect is a bristler;  
A tube of white lead,  
Or a punch on the head,  
Come equally handy to Whistler.*

*Dante Gabriel Rossetti*

"I only know of two real painters in the world," gushed a lady to Whistler. "Whistler and Velasquez."

"Why——," asked Whistler in his sweetest tones, "why drag in Velasquez?"

When, in 1874, there was some discussion of buying Whistler's famous portrait of Thomas Carlyle for the National Gallery, the curator, Sir George Scharf, called at the painter's studio to look at the picture. He stared at it a while and then remarked icily:

"Well . . . and has painting come to this?"

"No," replied Whistler, "unfortunately it hasn't."

A Scottish organization once started to raise a fund by subscription to buy Whistler's portrait of that famous Scottish man of let-

ters, Thomas Carlyle. When the fund was near the goal, Whistler learned that the subscription circular contained a clause disclaiming any endorsement of the artist's theories of art. He immediately telegraphed the committee:

"The price of 'Carlyle' has advanced five hundred guineas. Dinna ye hear the bagpipes?"

Whistler had finished the portrait of a well-known gentleman and asked the sitter how he liked it.

"I can't say that I do, Mr. Whistler. It's not a good likeness, and as a work of art it's not much."

The artist looked at the sitter through his monocle. "Ah, well," he drawled, "but then you must admit that you're not much as a work of nature."

Frederick Leighton, the British painter and member of the Royal Academy, and Whistler were comparing artistic notes.

"My dear Whistler," said Lord Leighton, "you always leave your work so sketchy, so rough. Why do you never finish it?"

"My dear Leighton," was the reply, "why do you ever begin?"

Whistler was strolling among the members of his class, one day, while they were engaged in sketching from a living model. He suddenly stopped and stared at one drawing in startled fashion. After a moment's silence, he turned from the picture to the student and wryly observed:

"Ah, well! You can hardly expect me to teach you morals."

At an exhibition of paintings, Whistler guided an important visitor to one of his paintings. The gentleman expressed his admiration

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most enthusiastically and then inquired if there were any other pictures that he ought to see.

"Other pictures!" exclaimed Whistler. "Other pictures! There are no other pictures! You are through!"

Mr. Whistler has always spelt Art with a capital I.

*Oscar Wilde*

A young artist brought to Whistler a painting for criticism—his maiden effort. After a rather prolonged silence the young man asked:

"Don't you think this painting of mine is a—er—a tolerable picture, sir?"

"What," demanded Whistler, "is your opinion of a tolerable egg?"

A young English artist, who was studying in Paris while Whistler was there, was afflicted, like most young artists, by a conspicuous lack of the coin of the realm. One day, as he was walking along one of the Grands Boulevards, he heard his name and turned to see Whistler hurrying toward him. A little flattered, he remarked, "So you recognized me from behind, did you?"

"Yes," answered Whistler wickedly, "I spied you through a hole in your coat."

A society lady was sitting for Whistler to paint her portrait. She insisted on bringing her pet Persian cat with her and kept it in her lap. Unfortunately, it yowled continuously.

"Madam," inquired Whistler, after a few minutes of this ordeal, "will you have the cat in the foreground or in the back yard?"



A gentleman, who was sitting for his portrait by Whistler, annoyed the artist by saying at each dismissal, "How about the ear, Mr. Whistler? Don't forget to finish the ear! Do you think you'll do it at the next sitting?"

At the last session, all being finished but the ear, the artist said complacently, "Well, it's through; now I'll sign it."

"But my ear!" exclaimed the sitter. "You're not going to leave it that way? With no ear?"

"Oh, *that!*" drawled Whistler. "Oh, you can put it in after you get home."

When Whistler left his house in Chelsea, he left this sign up over the door.

"'Unless the Lord build the house, their labor is but vain that build it.' *E. W. Godwin, Fellow of the Society of Architects, built this one.*"

## BOASTING

A fervent admirer was talking to George Ade, the famous American humorist.

"So you come from Indiana, Mr. Ade! Well, you're in good company—Booth Tarkington, Theodore Dreiser, and James Whitcomb Riley. Many great men come from Indiana."

"Yes," replied Ade, "and the greater they are, the faster they come."

One evening, at a dinner in Paris, a lady remarked to the painter, Whistler, that she believed that he knew King Edward VII personally.

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"No, madam," replied Whistler.

"Why," said the lady, "that's very odd. I met the King at a party last year and he said that he knew you."

"Oh," scoffed Whistler, "that's iust his brag."

The English humorist, Jerome K. Jerome, on his American tour, delighted to poke fun at various American customs and attitudes. Hearing for the thousandth time, that Englishmen couldn't realize the size of America, he replied:

"You Americans are always boasting of the *size* of your country. But if Switzerland rolled herself out as America has done, she would be every bit as large."

A merchant, who had made a fortune in cheese and by none too scrupulous methods, was boasting to Charles Lamb of his realistic approach to life.

"You must bear in mind," he said, "that I have got rid of all that stuff which you poets and philosophers call the milk of human kindness."

"Yes," retorted Lamb, "you turned it all to cheese years ago."

## BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Mark Twain was once showing some friends through his library. The visitors commented on the great number of books that were piled here and there on the floor, in chairs, and in every available place.

"You see," Twain explained, "it's next to impossible to borrow shelves."

Somerset Maugham advised a bright young man of his acquaintance, who complained of his idle life, to try writing a book.

"But," protested the young man, "I haven't anything to write about."

"My boy," said Maugham, "that is the most inconclusive reason for not writing that I ever heard."

Shortly after Calvin Coolidge's marriage, a door-to-door book-seller sold Mrs. Coolidge a weighty tome called "Our Family Physician" for eight dollars. Afraid of telling Mr. Coolidge about her purchase, she left the book lying around on the sittingroom table without saying anything about it.

Mr. Coolidge never mentioned the book but one day his wife glanced inside the cover and there on the fly-leaf her husband had written:

"Don't see any recipe for curing suckers."

*H. G. Wells of the big cerebellum,  
Used mountains of paper (or vellum);  
When his temper got bad,  
And we asked, "Why go mad?"  
He replied, "They won't do what I tell 'em!"*

Mark Twain once asked a neighbor if he could borrow one of his books.

"Why, yes, Mr. Clemens, of course. But I must ask you to read it here as you know I make it a rule never to let any book go out of my library."

A few days later the same neighbor wished to borrow Twain's lawn mower.

"Of course," replied the humorist, "but I must ask you to use it here as you know I make it a rule."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Augustus, Emperor of Rome, used to invite the two poets, Virgil and Horace to dine with him. Both the bards had their physical afflictions—Virgil asthma and Horace weak eyes.

"Here I am," said the Emperor one day as they were all three dining together, "between sighs and tears."

*You did late review my lays,  
Crusty Christopher;  
You did mingle blame and praise,  
Rusty Christopher.  
When I learnt from whom it came,  
I forgave you all the blame,  
Musty Christopher;  
I could not forgive the praise,  
Fusty Christopher.*

*Alfred Tennyson to Christopher  
North, replying to the lat-  
ter's criticism in "Blackwood's  
Magazine"*

Andrew Millar, the London bookseller and publisher, had been wearied exceedingly by the long process of seeing Doctor Johnson's famous Dictionary through the press. When the last sheets arrived from the Doctor, the bookseller wrote the following note to the lexicographer:

"Andrew Millar sends his compliments for Doctor Samuel Johnson with the money for the last sheets of the copy of the Dictionary, and thanks God he has done with him."

The Doctor sent the following reply:

"Doctor Samuel Johnson sends his compliments to Andrew Millar; he has received his note and is happy to find that Andrew Millar has the grace to thank God for anything."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Doctor Johnson, Boswell, and a Mr. Langton were discussing the respective merits of conversation and writing as vehicles for wit. Mr. Langton argued that conversational wit was evidence of the more agile mind since it depended on less fixed circumstances, whereas the writer of wit could control the circumstances to his own pleasing. He cited as an example Addison's remark: "I have only nine-pence in my pocket; but I can draw for a thousand pounds."

"Depend upon it, sir," retorted Johnson, "he had not that remark ready but had prepared it beforehand."

Langton laughed and turned to Boswell. "Ah, a fine surmise," he said. "Set a thief to catch a thief!"

Lord John Russell said that Sydney Smith once started to compile a book of maxims but never got beyond the first, which was this:

"Generally, toward the age of forty, women get tired of being virtuous, and men of being honest."

The poet William Wordsworth once remarked to Charles Lamb, "I believe that I could write like Shakespeare if I had a mind to try it."

To which Lamb replied, "Yes, all that's lacking is the mind."

His Connecticut neighbors often received visits from Mark Twain when he would be garbed most informally, in fact, often without necktie or collar. His wife was very much upset by his visiting around the neighborhood like this, and, one afternoon, when he had returned from a visit, she soundly berated him for his negligent appearance. So Twain went to his study and soon emerged with a small, neatly wrapped package. This he sent by messenger to the neighbor's house with the accompanying note:

"A little while ago, I visited you for about half an hour minus

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my collar and tie. The missing articles are enclosed. Will you kindly gaze at them for thirty minutes and then return them to me?"

A literary man was once extolling the many merits of Milton's *Paradise Lost* to Charles Lamb.

"Oh yes, of course," retorted Lamb, "but it seems to me that Adam and Eve act too much like married people."

Speaking of a certain poetess who had become the rage of the literary set, Charles Lamb remarked:

"If I were the man of her family, I would lock her up, and feed her on bread and water until she left off writing her poetry."

A woman who writes commits two sins: she increases the number of books, and decreases the number of women.

*Alphonse Karr*, of George Sand

In her novel, *Delphine*, Madame de Stael portrayed herself as the heroine and, to settle an account of long standing with Talleyrand, she portrayed the latter thinly disguised as an old woman.

Talleyrand, who considered that the authoress lacked feminine charm, met her soon after the publication of the novel.

"I am told," he said, "that we are both in your novel, disguised as women."

The French novelist and poet, Chateaubriand, had, at the beginning of his career, caused a great stir in all levels of society, fashionable, literary, and artistic.

Somewhat later, a friend remarked to Talleyrand that Chateaubriand was complaining of an increasing deafness.

"He only thinks he's deaf," replied Talleyrand cruelly, "since he no longer hears people talking about him."

A best-seller is the gilded tomb of a mediocre talent.

*Logan Pearsall Smith*

Soon after Doctor Johnson had completed the revised edition of his famous dictionary, a woman took him to task for inserting "improper words."

"My dear madam," replied the alert lexicographer, turning the accusing finger at her, "you have been looking for them."

The usually astute Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, whose famed Sherlock Holmes used clues almost miraculously, was placed in an embarrassing position by a French taxicab driver. The man had driven Sir Arthur from the station to a hotel and, when he received his fare, said, "Merci, M. Conan Doyle."

"Why, how do you know my name?" asked Sir Arthur with some surprise.

"Well, sir," explained the driver, "I have seen in the papers that you were coming from the south of France to Paris; your general appearance told me that you were English; your hair had clearly been last cut by a barber of the south of France. I put these indications together and guessed at once that it was you."

"That is very remarkable," said Sir Arthur, "You had no other evidence to go upon?"

"Well," admitted the man, "there was also the fact that your name was on your luggage."

Talleyrand was once asked if he did not find the authoress, Marceline Valmore, just a little tiresome.

"On the contrary," he replied, "I find her perfectly tiresome."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

An Irishwoman approached the novelist William Makepeace Thackeray and asked for alms. When she saw him put his hand in his pocket, she cried, "May the blessing of God follow you all your life!" But when the author only pulled out his snuff box, she instantly added, "and never overtake ye."

Boswell and Doctor Johnson were discussing the comparative merits of the so-called practical arts and the more intellectual ones. Boswell asked the Doctor if he did not think that good cooks were more essential to mankind than good poets.

"I don't suppose, sir," replied Johnson, "that there is a dog in town but what thinks so."

*There was a young man of Moose Jaw,  
Who wanted to meet Bernard Shaw;  
When they questioned him, "Why?"  
He made no reply,  
But sharpened his circular saw.*

The novelist, Henry James, once reviewed a novel by Gertrude Atherton. After reading the review, Mrs. Atherton wrote to Mr. James the following note:

"Dear Mr. James: I have read with the utmost pleasure your review of my novel. Will you kindly let me know whether you liked it or not? Sincerely, Gertrude Atherton."

When George Bernard Shaw first appeared on the London scene he started writing a column for a weekly publication. Oscar Wilde was at that time at the height of his fame as a wit. One evening a friend called on the latter and, noticing a copy of the paper to which Shaw was a contributor and reading one of Shaw's articles, said to Wilde:



"I say, Oscar, who is this chap G. B. S. who's writing for this paper?"

"He's a young Irishman named Shaw," replied Wilde. "Rather forceful, isn't he?"

"Forceful!" echoed the friend. "Well, rather! My word, he doesn't seem to spare anyone he knows. I should say he is in a fair way to make a lot of enemies."

"Well," said Wilde, "as yet he hasn't become prominent enough to have any enemies. But none of his friends like him."

The American novelist, William Dean Howells, once went on a trip to Ireland, and, in a Dublin hotel, he met the ex-mayor of Boston, Patrick Collins. They got into a discussion of Irish humor and Howells said that the old Irish wit was a thing of the past. Collins took exceptions to this and claimed that out in the country, the national sense of humor was as unrepresible as ever. They wagered that Howells was to ask the first person they met in some country place some foolish question and the person's answer would decide the issue.

The following day, the two hired a carriage and drove out into the country. About ten or twelve miles from the city, they turned down a country road toward a little hamlet, and confronted a very dirty barefooted boy of about twelve who was driving several pigs. They stopped the carriage and Howells beckoned to the lad. He came over and Howells asked him this outlandish question:

"Tell me, if the devil were to appear this very instant, which would he take, you or me?"

"Me, sir," was the reply.

"How do you figure that out?" asked Howells.

"Ach—sure," exclaimed the boy, "an' he could get you ony time!"

I wish I were as sure of anything as Macaulay is of everything.

*William Windham*

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

One of Emerson's Concord neighbors asked him if he could borrow a book with which to while away the time. A copy of Plato was pulled down from a shelf and handed over to the farmer. When the book was returned, Emerson asked his neighbor how he liked it.

"First rate," replied the farmer unstintingly, "that fellow Plato has got a lot of my ideas."

A young reporter called on Mark Twain to interview him. He found the writer comfortably ensconced in bed, reading and smoking. The reporter asked Mark for the story of his life.

"Well," drawled Mark, puffing on his pipe, "in the days of George III, when I was a young man, I used to——"

"Pardon me," interrupted the young man, "I know that you are no spring chicken, but you couldn't possibly have been living in the time of George III."

"Fine, my boy," exclaimed Mark. "I heartily congratulate you. You are the first and only reporter I've ever met who corrected a mistake *before* it appeared in print."

One evening, an amateur philosopher professed himself convinced of the truth of Bishop Berkeley's theory that nothing exists but that which is perceived by some mind. Dr. Johnson listened to this theorizing for a while, and then said:

"Pray sir, never leave us. For we may very likely forget to think of you, and then you will cease to exist."

The Welsh poet, Lewis Morris, was complaining to Oscar Wilde about the way the press ignored his poetry.

"It is a conspiracy of silence. What should I do, Oscar?"

"Join it," was the reply.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

The lives of poets off their guard is often at odds with their public attitude. Jerome K. Jerome was talking of the poet Swinburne.

"My last recollection of Swinburne," he said, "was at a London banquet. He had removed his shoes. As we rose to depart, we missed Swinburne but were finally reassured by hearing his voice coming from underneath the table.

"'Oh God,' he moaned. 'Oh God—if there be a God—where are me bally boots!'"

*John Stuart Mill  
By a mighty effort of will,  
Overcame his natural bonhomie  
And wrote "Principles of Political Economy."*

*E. C. Bentley*

When the famous love affair between Franz Liszt and the Countess d'Agoult was terminated, the lady took her revenge on the composer by writing a novel in which there appeared an unflattering portrait of Liszt, thinly disguised.

Upon reading this work, Liszt remarked, "The portrait would have been better had I sat for it longer."

The French writer, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, wrote an *Ode to Posterity*.

Voltaire remarked of it, "I am afraid that this poem will not reach its destination."

William Dean Howells, American novelist and critic, listened patiently as an author, in a somewhat bored tone, complained, "I

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don't seem to write as well today as I used to when I was young. I haven't the virility and vigor in my lines."

"Nonsense," Howells consoled him, "you write just as well as you ever did; your taste has improved, that's all!"

That inveterate smoker, Mark Twain, said, "I know it's very easy to give up smoking because I've tried it so often."

*On Waterloo's ensanguined plain  
Lie tens of thousands of the slain;  
But none, by saber or by shot,  
Fell half so flat as Walter Scott.*

*Thomas, Lord Erskine (1750-1823)*

During William Allen White's long reign as editor of the *Emporia Gazette* he quite often was swamped with stories that aspiring authors wanted printed in his paper.

In answer to one of his rejections a lady once wrote:

"Sir: You sent back last week a story of mine. I know that you did not read the story, for as a test I pasted together pages 18, 19, and 20. The story came back with these pages still pasted. So I know you are a fraud and turn down stories without reading them."

Mr. White wrote back:

"Dear Madam: At breakfast when I open an egg I don't have to eat it all to determine if it is bad."

Charles James Fox, the English statesman, once was asked his definition of luxury.

"Lying under a tree with a book," he said, "is a luxury only surpassed by lying under a tree without one."

Eugene Field, the famous writer, once received a letter containing a poem, from a hopeful young poet. The effort was entitled *Why Do I Live?*

Field immediately wrote back:

"Because you sent your poem by mail."

*A poodle was charged by the law  
With resembling Hall Caine. With his paw  
Pressed close to his forehead,  
He sobbed, "Yes, it's horrid,  
But at least it's not Bernard Shaw."*

A persistent beggar once asked Sir Walter Scott for a sixpence. Reaching into his pocket, Scott discovered that he had no coin less than a shilling. To be rid of the man, he handed him the shilling.

"Here's a shilling, but don't forget that you owe me a sixpence."

"And may your honor live 'til the day I pay ye!" was the retort.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan, noticing that Edward Gibbon, the historian, also was attending the trial of Warren Hastings in Westminster Hall, remarked to a friend that "the luminous author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* must be searching for more material for another book."

"I don't know whether he is or not," replied the friend, "But I can't understand why you flatter the man. I thought you didn't like him."

"I don't care for him. But what did I say about him that you construed as flattery?"

"You called him a luminous author."

"Did I? I'm sorry, I meant to say voluminous."

The ripple of light chatter at the Garrick Club subsided suddenly one evening when W. S. Gilbert, of light-opera fame, made the

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astounding statement that Shakespeare's writing was very obscure. Immediately his assertion was challenged and he was asked to prove it.

Then Gilbert recited the following passage and asked his listeners what they made of it:

"I would as lief be thrust through a quickset hedge as cry 'plosh to callow throstle.'"

"There's nothing obscure about that," declared one member. "It's perfectly clear. Here's a man, a great lover of the feathered songsters, who rather than disturb the caroling of the little warbler prefers to go through the intense pain of thrusting himself through a thorny hedge. But I don't recognize the passage. In what play does it occur?"

"In no play," replied Gilbert, "they are meaningless words I just threw together, but they make jolly good Shakespeare."

*Franz Liszt*

A friend was talking to Franz Liszt and suggested that he should write his life.

"Ah, no, my friend," replied Liszt, "it is enough to have lived it."

*Liszt friend*

George Bernard Shaw was examining some volumes in a second-hand bookstore when he came across a volume of his own plays, very much reduced in price. Moreover the book was inscribed to a friend beneath whose name G. B. S. saw, written in his own hand, "With the compliments of George Bernard Shaw."

Buying the book, the author wrote under the previous inscription: "With renewed compliments. G. B. S."

And he sent it back to the original recipient.

At one time the English novelist, William Makepeace Thackeray, had political aspirations and put himself up for election from a borough in Southern England. One night he made a speech before a definitely hostile audience which repeatedly interrupted him, and

with everyone talking at once the speaker was at times nearly forgotten.

"There seem to be a great many fools here tonight," said the exasperated Thackeray. "I should think it would be much more sensible to hear one at a time."

"Yes, that's so," said a voice, "get on wi' your speech."

On Colley Cibber's appointment as Poet Laureate  
to George II, 1730

*In merry Old England it once was the rule,  
The King had his poet as well as his fool;  
But now we're so frugal, I'd have you to know it,  
That one man now serves both for fool and for poet.*

*Anonymous*

On the Same

*Tell, if you can, which did the worse,  
Caligula, or Grafton's Grace.  
That made a Consul of a horse,  
And this a Laureate of an ass.*

*Alexander Pope*

When the writer, Gertrude Stein, was a student at Radcliffe, she took a course under William James, the philosopher. When the time came to take the examination, Miss Stein wrote on her paper:

"My dear Professor James, I really do not feel like taking an examination today." She then handed in the paper and left.

The paper was returned in due time with a note from Professor James: "My dear Miss Stein, I sometimes feel that way myself."

The paper got a B.

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Balzac, the French novelist, woke up out of a sound sleep and saw a man picking the lock of his desk. He burst out into loud laughter whereupon the thief whirled around in astonishment.

"What are you laughing at?" asked the intruder.

"I am laughing, *mon ami*," replied Balzac, "to see what pains you are taking to find money in a desk where the lawful owner has never been able to find any."

To Alexandre Dumas, the man who was questioning him about his family tree for a newspaper article seemed a little too prying.

"You are a quadroon, Mr. Dumas?" he began.

"I am, sir," Dumas replied blandly enough.

"And your father?"

"Was a mulatto," Dumas finished.

"And your grandfather?"

"Was a full-blooded Negro," the writer replied testily.

"And what was your great grandfather?"

"An ape, sir!" shouted Dumas, "An ape; my pedigree commences where yours terminates."

*Still must I hear?—shall hoarse Fitzgerald bawl  
His creaking couplets in a tavern hall,  
And I not sing, lest, haply, Scotch Reviews  
Should dub me scribbler, and denounce my Muse?*

*Lord Byron*

*I find Lord Byron scorns my muse—  
Our fates are ill agreed!  
His verse is safe—I can't abuse  
Those lines I never read.*

*Reply by Thomas Fitzgerald*

William Dean Howells, the American writer, was once asked by a small boy the meaning of the word "penury."



"Penury, my child," answered Howells, "means the wages of the pen."

Someone was describing a scholarly historian to Lincoln, and closed by saying, "It may be doubted whether any man of our generation has plunged more deeply into the sacred fount of learning."

"Yes, or come up drier," retorted Lincoln.

It was reported that toward the close of his career, Mark Twain received a dollar a word for a magazine article. A wag once sent him a dollar with a note saying, "Dear Mark: Please send me a word."

The written reply soon came—"Thanks."

ON THE LAKE POETS—WORDSWORTH AND SOUTHEY, ETC.

*They lived by the Lakes, an appropriate quarter  
For poems diluted with plenty of water.*

*Reverend C. Townsend*

An independent spirit like Voltaire's was bound to make a good many enemies. One of his literary rivals, Piron, antagonized by something the witty old rationalist had said wrote the word *Villain* on Voltaire's door.

The next time they met, Voltaire smiled and imperturbably said, "How much courtesy you have shown me by leaving your name at my door."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

After having seen a book of his through the press and having received favorable notices, Oscar Levant, the composer and pianist, met one of his old friends.

"Why, Oscar," exclaimed the friend, "I didn't know that you'd written a book! Why didn't you tell me?"

"Oh that!" retorted Oscar with great scorn. "What do you think I was doing all day yesterday?"

After having heard suspicious reports about Haywood's *The Life of Henry IV*, Queen Elizabeth summoned Lord Bacon to ask him about the book, since she knew that her Chancellor would have read it.

"Tell me, my lord," she inquired, "is it true that there is treason in this *Life* of Haywood's?"

"No, Your Majesty," replied Bacon, "but there is felony in it, for he has stolen most of it from Tacitus."

Poor Matt (Matthew Arnold), he's gone to Heaven, no doubt—but he won't like God.

*Robert Louis Stevenson,*  
on hearing of Arnold's death.

Years ago, Samuel Goldwyn, the movie magnate, imported the Belgian dramatist and author of the famous *Life of the Bees*, Maurice Maeterlinck, to write for the screen. Maeterlinck disavowed any knowledge of motion picture technique but Goldwyn reassured him.

"You don't have to know anything about it," he said. "Just go home and write your greatest book over in the form of a scenario. We'll take care of the rest."

Quite a few weeks later, M. Maeterlinck appeared at Mr. Goldwyn's office with the finished script. The producer delightedly

seized the manuscript and rushed into his private office and shut the door. In a minute the door burst open and Goldwyn charged out in a frenzy.

"My God!" he wailed. "The hero is a *bee*!"

A young author, generously endowed with a measure of conceit, was talking to Alexis Piron, the French author, of his plans.

"I want to write something," he said, "something very original that no one else has ever tried."

"Try writing your own panegyric," remarked Piron drily.

A young man just out of school was talking to Douglas Jerrold about his aspirations to be an author—how eager he was to get into print.

"Be advised by me, my dear young man," replied Jerrold, "don't be in a hurry to take down the shutters until there is something in the window."

Alexander Pope, as a young man, wondered whether he should enlist under the banner of any particular political party. The question bothered him and he asked the advice of Joseph Addison. Addison's reply was a model of tact and good sense:

"You, who will deserve the praise of the whole nation, should never content yourself with the praise of half of it."

The English writer, Bulwer Lytton, once had the following correspondence with Horace Walpole.

"My dear Walpole: Here I am at Bath—bored to tears. I am almost forced to write something. I am thinking of writing a play about your great ancestor, Sir Robert Walpole. Had not he a sister, Lucy, and did she not marry a Jacobite?"

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In a few days the following reply came:

"My dear Lytton: I care little for my family and still less for Sir Robert, but I *do* know that he never had a sister Lucy so she could not very well have married a Jacobite."

Lytton replied:

"My dear Walpole: Too late! Too late! Sir Robert has a sister *now*, her name is Lucy, and she *did* marry a Jacobite! I've written the play!"

The young, impetuous novel-writing wife of Lord Melbourne, Lady Caroline Lamb, once in a fit of anger knocked down one of her pages with a footstool. Thomas Moore was discussing the incident with Lord Strangford, who said:

"Oh well, nothing is more natural for a literary lady than to double down a page."

"I would advise Lady Caroline," replied Moore, "to turn over a new leaf."

The "Sun King," Louis XIV, had a rather high opinion of himself as a poet. Therefore, it was in rather a difficult position that he put Boileau, when he handed some of his verses to the latter and asked for his opinion of them.

"Ah!" exclaimed Boileau after some reflection, "nothing is impossible with Your Majesty! Your Majesty has wished to write a bad poem and you have succeeded!"

## BORES

The art of evading the bore was brought to a high pitch by the late Alexander Woolcott. Once when he thought that the mono-

logue of a certain actor had gone on about far enough, Woolcott interrupted the flow of talk.

"Excuse me, my leg has gone to sleep. Do you mind if I join it?"

Whistler had no patience for people he considered bores. He would either ignore them completely or lash out at them with scathing remarks.

He was just finishing a painting in another artist's house when a friend of the latter came in. Whistler continued with his painting, paying no attention to the visitor.

"Oh, Mr. Whistler," the man said, "you're here, eh? Do you know I passed your house last night?"

"Oh, did you?" said Whistler, without looking up. "Thanks very much."

A boring country magistrate was once inflicting on Doctor Johnson a long and tedious account of having heard a case and sentencing the four defendants to transportation to Australia.

Johnson, in an agony of impatience, finally burst out: "I heartily wish, sir, that I were a fifth!"

Oscar Wilde was at a dinner-party where he was cornered by one of the worst bores in London. Everything reminded him of something else which he proceeded to tell at great length.

Finally he said, "Speaking of the South of France reminds me of the time——"

Wilde looked surprised. "Good Heavens! You're quite right. I had no idea it was so late." With this, the strategic author made his getaway.

A gentleman, evidently not overly admired by Doctor Johnson, once remarked to him that there were many valid reasons for drinking to excess.

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"You know, sir," he declared, "drinking drives away care and makes us forget whatever is disagreeable. Would you not allow a man to drink for that reason?"

"Yes, sir!" was the emphatic reply. "If he sat next to *you*!"

How President Lincoln managed to get rid of a bore who took up too much of his valuable time was related by Justice Carter of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia. The situation reached its climax when the President, with many appointments before him, found himself delayed by the bore, who happened to be bald-headed.

Lincoln walked over to a cabinet, took a bottle from it, and proffering it to the man, said:

"Did you ever try this stuff?"

"No," the man replied, after looking at the label, "what is it for?"

"It is said that this will grow hair on a pumpkin," replied Lincoln. "Take it and try it for several months. If hair doesn't grow immediately, keep on trying. Rub it in well each day for about ten months then come back and let me know how it works."

That is at least one time that hair tonic worked.

A very prosy old gentleman once met Douglas Jerrold on the street and hailed him.

"Well, Jerrold, my dear boy, what is going on?"

"I am," replied Jerrold, and did.

At an evening party at Mrs. Thrale's when Doctor Johnson was also present, a learned but pompous barrister was regaling the company with a long story, the whole point of which was that the Law Courts were infested with fleas and the Most Worshipful Judges of the King's Bench, the barristers, solicitors, and clerks had all been

most grievously bitten by the little interlopers, all of which had sadly detracted from the dignity, decorum, and comfort of the court and had indeed impeded the administration of justice. When this long-winded narrative had finally leisurely drifted to its close, Doctor Johnson impatiently burst out:

"It is a pity, sir, that you have not seen any lions; for a flea has taken you such a time, that a lion must have served you for a twelve-month!"

A New Jersey member of Congress introduced two of his constituents to President Lincoln, calling them "Two of the weightiest men in Southern New Jersey."

They spouted some rare inanities, and after they had left, Lincoln remarked:

"I wonder that end of the state didn't tip up when they got off it."

It was quite plain that one of Doctor Johnson's guests was awed by the great man. He bowed and scraped, smirked, tittered, and laughed at everything the doctor said. This effort to ingratiate himself so irritated the doctor that finally he could stand it no longer.

Fixing the man with a cold and haughty stare, Johnson said, "Pray, sir, what is the matter? I do hope that I have not said anything that *you* can comprehend."

The one-armed Lord Nelson, British naval hero, was once subjected to the prolonged staring of one of those stupid people who find physical disabilities fascinating. After a while the person could contain himself no longer but blurted out, "I beg your pardon, my lord, but I see you have lost an arm."

Nelson picked up his empty sleeve and peered into it anxiously.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed in a surprised fashion, "I do believe you are right!"

"Don't you remember me?" asked a nonentity of the composer, Rossini. "It was at that dinner in Milan and they served a gigantic macaroni pie."

"Indeed," said Rossini. "I remember the macaroni pie perfectly, but I don't remember you."

A long-winded congressman once buttonholed Henry Clay and kept him riveted to the spot by a long harangue on some petty problem. Clay began to protest but the man forestalled him.

"You may speak for the present generation," he said, "but I, sir, speak for posterity."

"Yes," replied Clay, "and it seems you are resolved to speak until your audience arrives."

The silencing of a bore is not one of the kindest offices of the witty remark but it frequently is one of the most useful. Doctor Johnson was once bombarded with a great many personal questions from a man who interlarded his questions with gratuitous information about himself. Johnson stood it as long as he could, then arose from his chair with dignity and remarked:

"Sir, you have but two topics, yourself and me. I am sick of both."

When Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the playwright, was supervising the rehearsals of a new play, an actor, who was also something of a bore, met him backstage and started to give him detailed advice on how to handle some of the incidents in the new produc-



tion. He went on at great length and then interrupted himself and said, "But I fear I've been intruding on your attention."

"No, no," replied Sheridan, pleasantly. "I've not been listening."

Bore: a person who talks when you wish him to listen.

*Ambrose Bierce*

One of Whistler's barbs wounded a lady so severely that she cried, "Why have you hurt and insulted people all your life?"

"My dear madam," he explained, "I will tell you a secret. Early in life I made the discovery that I was charming. After further study, I found that if one is delightful, one has to thrust the world away to keep from being bored to death."

Hearing a friend continually complaining about the state of his digestion, Doctor Johnson remarked:

"Do not be like the spider, man, and spin conversation incessantly out of thy own bowels."

## BOSTON

Mrs. "Jack" Gardner, the famous Boston hostess, was remarking on the change that had come over Boston society.

"Here in Boston," she declared, "when we used to give a dinner, for guests we had Mr. Lowell, Mr. Emerson, Mr. Longfellow, Dr. Holmes, and so on. Now we just have the and-so-ons."

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At a very Bostonian gathering, there were present Julia Ward Howe, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Edward Everett Hale. Mrs. Howe remarked that it was fortunate that Boston was not like London.

"Why so?" asked one.

"Well, it's a good thing for all of us here," she replied, "that Boston doesn't drop its H's!"

A charity worker once called on Mrs. "Jack" Gardner for a donation to the Boston Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary.

Mrs. Gardner replied, "I didn't know that there was a charitable eye or ear *in* Boston!"

In his youth, the writer, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, was rather a dandy. A Boston bluestocking, known for her austere viewpoint, referred to him once as "effeminate." A friend reported this epithet to Aldrich.

"So I am," he assented, "compared with her."

## CARDS

Charles Lamb was playing cards with a friend who was not overly careful of the niceties of grooming. Surveying his partner's grimy paws, Lamb exclaimed:

"Martin, if dirt were trumps, what a hand you'd have!"

Charles Dickens was playing cards with a lady who had the habit of taking cat-naps between rubbers. When their opponent took a

trick with the king of trumps and banged on the table decisively as he did so, the lady awoke with a start.

"My dear madam," remarked her partner, the novelist, "you look awfully like one of the risen souls on the day of judgment."

"Why so?" asked the lady.

"Because you were awakened by the Last Trump."

## CHILDREN

A young woman sitting next to Bernard Shaw at dinner remarked:

"What a wonderful thing is youth!"

"Yes—and what a crime to waste it on children," G. B. S. replied.

President Lincoln said that many of the congressmen reminded him of the little girl whose mother had refused to let her go out and play. She kept teasing and whining until her mother had to spank her and put her to bed for an hour. At the end of the hour, the little girl got up and came out of the bedroom, looked at her mother, and said:

"Well, ma, can I go out an' play *now*?"

A fond mother was once expatiating at great length to Douglas Jerrold on the more than ordinary beauties of her infant son. In her enthusiasm, she finally burst forth:

"Really, Mr. Jerrold, I cannot find words to convey to you how very pretty he is!"

"I see," retorted Jerrold. "In short, it's a child more easily conceived than described."

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One day Abraham Lincoln was striding along a street in Springfield with two of his boys, both of whom were wailing loudly.

"Why, Mr. Lincoln, what's the matter with the boys?" asked a passerby.

"Just what's the matter with the whole world," Lincoln replied. "I've got three walnuts and each want two."

Charles Lamb visited a friend of his in the country during the Christmas holidays and was the not entirely willing participant at a children's party. Arriving at the dinner table after the party had disbanded, Lamb rose and proposed the toast.

"To the much calumniated King Herod!" he exclaimed.

It was suggested to George Bernard Shaw by Isadora Duncan, the dancer, that from the standpoint of eugenics they should be the parents of a child.

"Think," she said, "what a child it would be, with my body and your brain."

"Ah, yes, dear lady," was the reply. "But just imagine if the child had your brain and my body."

The Abbé Morold, the French ecclesiastic, said one day, "I like to hear a child cry."

"What makes you say that?" asked his companion.

"Because there is then some hope that it will be sent away," was the reverend gentleman's retort.

Sydney Smith saw a child stroking the back of a turtle.

"Why are you doing that?" he asked the child.

"Oh, to please the turtle."

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"My dear child," laughed Smith, "you might as well stroke the dome of St. Paul's to please the Dean and Chapter."

Like so many good people, Mrs. Horace Greeley was full of advice on how to bring up children. Once when she was somewhat officiously telling an acquaintance what to do in the case of disciplining a child, her friend interrupted:

"By the way, how many children have you, Mrs. Greeley?"

"I have two."

"And how many have you had?" persisted the other.

"Nine," was the reply.

"Well, thank you, but I'll bring up my children in my own way."

"Oh, very well," retorted Mrs. Greeley; "but I didn't raise children for this world, but the next."

Benjamin Franklin's economy-bent mind functioned efficiently very early in life. He was only a child when he discovered one great time-saving possibility.

"Father," he said, just as the task of salting the winter's provisions had been completed, "I think that if you said grace over the whole cask, it would save a great deal of time later on."

After a long period of inactivity in the fighting between North and South, President Lincoln was handed a telegram informing him that firing had been heard in the direction of Knoxville, where General Burnside was believed to be in danger.

When the President calmly remarked that he was glad, someone expressed surprise at his statement.

"I'll tell you why I'm glad," the President explained. "You see, this situation is very similar to one in which a neighbor of mine found herself. Mistress Sallie Ward, who had a very large family, heard one of them crying in an out-of-the-way place. Immediately

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Mrs. Ward sighed and said, 'Well, there's one of my children not dead yet.'"

The first half of our lives is ruined by our parents and the second half by our children.

*Clarence S. Darrow*

Referring to a boy who was loudly criticizing his father for being an old fogey, Mark Twain observed:

"When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was amazed to see how much he had learned in seven years."

## CIVILIZATION

Mungo Park, the African explorer, in one of his travels went far afield until his companions feared that they were lost. After days of traveling, the party finally came upon a crude gibbet.

Park later wrote, concerning this incident, "What infinite pleasure the sight of this gibbet gave me, as it proved that I was approaching civilized society."

While touring America, the English author, G. K. Chesterton was taken by several enthusiastic New Yorkers to see Broadway and Times Square at night.

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Chesterton, after a moment's silent gazing at the millions of electric lights, turned to his friends and remarked:

"How beautiful it would be for someone who could not read!"

Someone remarked in Talleyrand's presence that Joseph Fouché, head of Napoleon's secret police, had a great contempt for mankind.

"Yes," agreed Talleyrand wearily, "that is true. He has studied it well."

General Sherman and Chief Sitting Bull were negotiating a treaty. After the pipe had been smoked, auguries consulted, wardances danced, and pow-wows pow-wowed, a little recess seemed not only advisable but necessary. The Chief suggested that some hunting would be agreeable and the General thought so too. However, the General was somewhat dubious about leaving his possessions in the tent and frankly told his doubts to the Chief.

"They are perfectly safe," replied the Chief. "Except for yourself and your aides, there isn't a white man around within a hundred miles."

Do not do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same.

*George Bernard Shaw*

## CLERGYMEN

Henry Ward Beecher, the clergyman, once met a friend on Fifth Avenue who had just lost considerable money at a nearby club and

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was naturally in bad temper. When Beecher greeted him, the friend replied with a series of oaths. The shocked Beecher lifted up his hands in horror and exclaimed, "What language; oh, what language!"

This restored the friend's good humor and, laughing, he slapped Beecher on the back, and said, "It's all right, Henry; you preach a great deal, and I swear a great deal, but neither of us means anything by it."

Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin, was visiting at a country house.

The small daughter of the family stared rather rudely at the prelate's attire, the gaiters and apron.

In an effort to distract the child's attention, the archbishop asked, "Do you know the Lord's Prayer?"

"Yes," she said.

"Do you know the Ten Commandments?" he continued.

"Yes?" she answered.

"And the Creed, too?" he asked again.

This time the child just nodded her head.

"Well, and do you know your catechism?" the archbishop asked.

"Damn it all," was the petulant reply. "I'm only seven!"

Doctor S. Parkes Cadman, the "Radio" clergyman, once received a letter from a young man with the following query:

"Is it possible to lead a good Christian life in New York City on eighteen dollars a week?"

"My boy," replied Doctor Cadman, "that's all you can do."

Mark Twain, having just heard a sermon by Bishop Doane, said to him at the end of the service, "Doctor Doane, I enjoyed your



sermon this morning. I welcomed it like an old friend, as I have a book at home that contains every word of it."

The bishop indignantly denied this but Twain insisted.

"Well," said the exasperated Doctor Doane, "if you have, I'd like to see it."

Mark Twain agreed and the following day sent Doctor Doane an unabridged dictionary.

"I believe that you never heard me preach, Charles," said Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Charles Lamb, referring to the days when he was a Unitarian minister.

"Yes, I have," replied Lamb, "in fact, I never heard you do anything else!"

Archbishop Fénelon frequently approached Cardinal Richelieu for contributions to his many charitable undertakings. But the good Archbishop rarely met with much success.

Once when in the course of conversation he told Richelieu that he had just seen a portrait of him, Richelieu said wearily, "And did you ask it for a contribution?"

"No," answered Fénelon. "I saw there was no chance, it was so like you."

Sydney Smith was out walking with a fellow-clergyman, the Lord Bishop of Exeter, when they passed a butcher's shop where a sign hung out over the sidewalk, *Tongues Cured Here*.

"Shall we go in, my lord?" asked Smith.

Henry Ward Beecher was once interrupted in the middle of a speech by an imitation of a rooster crowing.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

He nonchalantly stepped aside, sipped a glass of water and waited for the crowing and the subsequent laughter to subside.

Then he took out his watch, looked at it closely and said:

"That's strange. My watch says that it is only ten o'clock. But it must be morning, for the instincts of the lower animals are infallible."

*Our dean is good Mr. Inge;  
One evening he offered to sing,  
So we asked him to stoop,  
Put his head in a loop,  
And pulled at each end of the string.*

The English poet, Samuel Rogers, was famous for his dinner-parties. At one of them, instead of having candles in the center of the table as previously, the room was lit by chandeliers attached to the ceiling and walls. He asked a guest, Sydney Smith, the clergyman and noted wit, what he thought of it.

"No, I don't like it," replied Smith. "It reminds me too much of the Day of Judgment . . . a flood of blinding light above, while below nothing but darkness and gnashing of teeth."

Park Benjamin, the poet and humorist, was asked by Henry Ward Beecher why he never came to hear him preach.

"Why, Beecher," Benjamin explained, "The fact is, I have definite conscientious scruples against going to places of amusement on Sunday."

Henry Ward Beecher once listened to a young minister preach a sermon. Afterwards, he went up to speak to the young man and asked him how long it had taken him to write the sermon.

"Why, that took me about a day."

"I congratulate you," exclaimed Beecher. "For it took me nearly a week!"

Doctor Whately, later Archbishop of Dublin, was once officiating at a funeral when he came to that part of the service which reads, "Our deceased brother or sister." Not knowing the sex of the deceased, the Doctor turned to one of the mourners and said in a questioning tone, "Brother or sister?"

The mourner innocently replied, "Oh. no relation at all, sir, just an acquaintance."

Sydney Smith was among the guests one evening at a dinner party where all the company was kept waiting for the arrival of an eminent bishop. Everyone grew more and more impatient until finally a note arrived saying that the bishop was unable to be present because of a strange misfortune. It seems that as the bishop was passing through a crowded street, a dog, without any provocation at all, rushed out of the crowd and bit the bishop in the leg.

"Well, perhaps," observed Smith, "but I should like to hear the dog's account of the story."

Mark Twain was scheduled to address a company of clergymen. With some trepidation, he donned his Prince Albert coat and his silk hat and sallied forth. All went smoothly; his talk was well received, and he inwardly congratulated himself on it. On the way home, however, he couldn't help wondering why his thoughts were of such an elevated and noble kind—moral, ethical, and pious.

Upon arriving home, he discovered that the silk hat he was wearing was not his, but one belonging to one of the clergymen.

Later, while preparing to sleep that night, an ominous thought occurred to him, and he threw up his hands and exclaimed:

"Good God! What is the man thinking of who had my hat on!"

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Calvin Coolidge attended church alone because of the indisposition of Mrs. Coolidge. When he arrived back home he went up to his wife's room to see how she was feeling. She promptly reassured him, and asked him if he had enjoyed the sermon. He replied in a weak affirmative.

"What was it about?" she continued.

"Sin."

"What did the minister say?"

"He was against it."

Susan B. Anthony was speaking at a meeting in behalf of woman's rights when she was interrupted by a clergyman who was well-known for being of unyielding opinions and for being the father of a large family.

"The Apostle Paul," he announced, "recommends silence in women. Why don't you mind him?"

"The Apostle Paul also recommends celibacy in clergymen," retorted Miss Anthony. "Why don't you mind him?"

*The Reverend Henry Ward Beecher  
Called a hen a most elegant creature.  
The hen, pleased with that,  
Laid an egg in his hat,  
And thus did the hen reward Beecher!*

*Oliver Wendell Holmes*

Doctor Randall Davidson, the eminent bishop of Winchester, was attending an ecclesiastical function.

When the clergy were assembling to enter the dining-room an unctuous archdeacon observed, "This is the time to put a bridle on our appetites."

"Yes," replied the bishop, "and to put a bit in our mouths!"

Sydney Smith was unwillingly drawn into an argument with an acquaintance. The latter, who had no use for the clergy, hoped to demolish his opponent by saying, "If I had a son who was an idiot, I would make him a clergyman!"

"Your father, evidently, was of a different opinion," was Smith's imperturbable reply.

The British writer and humorist, A. P. Herbert, was once speaking at a dinner in London. He mentioned the well-known cleric, W. R. Inge, then Dean of St. Paul's, who among his many other activities is a great contributor to the contemporary press.

"He is usually described as a pillar of the Church," remarked Mr. Herbert. "Really, he is two columns of an evening newspaper."

Sydney Smith was speaking of a certain Bishop in what must be concluded to be none too complimentary terms.

"He is so like Judas," he remarked, "that he confirms one's faith in the Apostolic Succession."

"Orthodoxy, my Lord," said Bishop Warburton, in a whisper,—  
"orthodoxy is my doxy,—heterodoxy is another man's doxy."

*Joseph Priestley*

A French authoress has said that it was a pity that the Church prevented Liszt, because of his past life, from assuming the full powers of the priesthood and only made him the Abbé of a minor order. "For," she explained, "no one could have heard confession with greater understanding."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

On one of his trips to Scotland, Sydney Smith preached a sermon at a church in Edinburgh. He noticed that his congregation was made up mostly of ladies and upon ascending the pulpit he announced "that he would take as his text the verse from the Psalms: 'O, that *men* would therefore praise the Lord.'"

The Bishop of Meaux, Jacques Bossuet, was talking with a rather insolent nobleman.

"I never go to church, as perhaps you have noticed," the nobleman remarked. "For one thing, there are too many hypocrites there for me."

"Well, don't let that keep you away, my lord," said the bishop, smiling quietly, "because there is always room for one more."

The question of papal infallibility and its limits, put to Cardinal Gibbons at a dinner table by a lady seated a little distance off, was answered by the Cardinal in the following manner:

"I can only say that during the last interview I had with His Holiness he addressed me constantly as Cardinal Gibbons."

Some assertions that Leonard Bacon, the theologian, made while attending a conference were vehemently objected to by a member of the opposition.

"Why," he spluttered indignantly, "I never heard of such a thing in all my life."

"Mr. Moderator," Bacon murmured softly as he focused his gaze upon the referee, "I cannot allow my opponent's ignorance, however vast, to offset my knowledge, however limited."

An English gentleman's religious beliefs were beginning to be assailed by doubts. He decided to consult a clergyman since he might

be expected to have some constructive ideas on the matter. Unfortunately, in this case the clergyman chosen was the witty divine, the Reverend Sydney Smith.

"What is *your* idea of Heaven?" asked the doubting Thomas.

"My idea of Heaven?" mused Smith. "Eating *foie gras* to the sound of trumpets."

Whether this effected a cure of religious doubt is not recorded.

As Billy Sunday paused for breath during one of his more violent sermons, a young skeptic in the congregation took the opportunity to interject a question.

"Who was Cain's wife?" he demanded.

In all seriousness the perspiring evangelist answered:

"I honor every seeker after the truth. But I should like to warn this man that he shouldn't risk salvation by too many inquiries after other men's wives."

Both the Reverend Doctor William Ellery Channing and his brother, a physician, lived for a time in the same house in Boston. A countryman in search of the divine knocked at the Channings' door.

"Does Doctor Channing live here?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Can I see him?"

"I am he."

"Who? You?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have altered considerably since I heard you preach."

"Heard me preach?"

"Certainly. You're the Doctor Channing that preaches, ain't you?"

"Oh, I see now that you are mistaken. It is my brother who preaches. I am the doctor who practices."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

The great physicist, Sir Isaac Newton, had a nephew who was a clergyman. This clergyman would never take a fee for performing a marriage.

"Go your way, poor wretches," he would always say at the conclusion of the ceremony. "I have done you enough mischief already."

### ON THE SETTLING OF PENNSYLVANIA

*Penn refused to pull his hat off  
Before the King, and therefore sat off,  
Another country to light pat on  
Where he could worship with his hat on.*

C. G. Bombaugh

A learned Doctor of Divinity was reading his latest philosophical work to the King of England, James I. The King, who had considerable erudition in theology, listened intently for some time, the expression on his face growing more and more puzzled.

"Upon my honor, my good sir," remarked the King, interrupting the reader, "your book is like the Peace of God . . . it passeth all understanding."

Archbishop Ryan of Philadelphia was attending a banquet at which were present several high officials of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Also with them was the Railroad's legal counsel, ex-Attorney-General MacVeagh.

"Oh yes," said MacVeagh to the Archbishop, "railroad men always take their lawyers with them even on social occasions. Which reminds me that I wanted to ask you, since we give you free passes on the Railroad, why don't you give us a free pass to Paradise in return?"



"No," replied the Archbishop, "it would never do. I would not want to separate the railroad men from their legal counsel."

When a delegation of clergymen called on President Lincoln and offered him advice that they assured him was the Lord's will, the President remarked that it reminded him of the balloonist who plied his trade at fairs around New Orleans.

Once, all decked out in his carnival finery of silks and spangles, the balloonist floated off for a considerable distance and came down to earth in a cotton field where a number of slaves were picking cotton. One look at the new arrival and all the cotton-pickers ran off like scared rabbits, except one old white-haired man who was too feeble to follow his companions. He stood still, removed his hat, and bowed low, as the dazzling balloonist stepped out of the basket.

"Good mo'nin', Mistah Jesus," he said, reverently, "how's yo' pa?"

Once, travelling in Indiana, George Ade, the humorist, stopped at a hotel for dinner where a clergymen's conference was being held. In the dining-room, he was the only lay person. Someone asked him later about the experience.

"I felt," mused Ade, "like a lion in a den of Daniels."

A clergyman who attended the opening service at the Harvard College Chapel was describing to Phillips Brooks what a fine sight it was to see President Eliot singing:

*"Am I a soldier of the Cross,  
A follower of the Lamb?"*

"Asking questions, as usual," commented the Reverend Doctor Brooks.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

In the Royal Chapel at Versailles, Madame du Deffand was listening to a sermon that the Cardinal Melchior de Polignac was delivering on the life of St. Denis. He described at some length how the Saint was martyred at the hill now named in his honor, Montmartre, and how the Saint arose, picked up his severed head, and carried it two leagues to where St. Denis' Abbey now stands. The Cardinal waxed eloquent on the distance covered by the Saint after his beheading. Finally, with a yawn, Mme. du Deffand turned to her companion and whispered behind her fan:

"The distance is nothing; it's only the first step that matters!"

Eugene Field tried to engage a lady who was his dinner companion in some light conversation.

"Have you read," he inquired, "the new story, *The Kentucky Cardinal*, by James Lane Allen?"

"No," she replied, "I'm not interested in ecclesiastical biography."

"But *this* Kentucky cardinal, my dear lady, is a bird."

"I don't doubt it," was the rejoinder. "I am creditably informed that there are many high flyers among the clergy."

A clergyman once visited Thomas Hood, when the latter was in his last illness. Noticing the mournful expression on the clergyman's face, Hood looked at him compassionately.

"My dear sir," he remarked, "I am afraid your religion doesn't agree with you."

## CREDITORS

Late in his life, William Penn met with financial reverses and was considerably plagued by his creditors. He therefore caused a

peep-hole to be made in his door whereby he could inspect any visitor at his leisure before admitting him.

One day a creditor knocked and then waited and waited for someone to open the door, when Penn's servant appeared around the corner of the house, seemingly unaware of the visitor's presence.

"You there," shouted the creditor, "what's the matter! Won't your master see me?"

"Friend," replied the servant, over his shoulder, "my master *has* seen thee, and he doesn't like thy looks."

A distraught money lender sought out Baron Rothschild to ask his advice. It seems that this fellow had loaned ten thousand francs to someone who had left the country and the money lender had neglected to obtain an acknowledgment of the debt.

"Do you know his present whereabouts?" asked the Baron.

"Yes," replied the money lender, "he is in Alexandria."

"Well, write him there and ask him to send the fifty thousand francs that he owes you. He will write back to tell you that he owes you only ten thousand and there you'll have your acknowledgment."

No man's credit is as good as his money.

*E. W. Howe*

An irate tradesman barricaded himself at Talleyrand's door. He repeatedly rang the bell and when a servant appeared would insist on seeing the Prince. Finally, Talleyrand peeked out through the grille.

"What do you want?" snapped Talleyrand.

"I want to know when you are going to pay me," shouted the merchant.

"How very curious you are!" exclaimed Talleyrand, as he shut the grille.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

The parliamentarian, Lord Alvanley, was describing a friend who was in financially reduced circumstances.

"He's a great fool," he remarked, "squandering all his money like that to pay his debts."

If you want the time to pass quickly, just give your note for 90 days.

*R. B. Thomas*

Mark Twain once made the following inspiring New Year's resolution:

"I'm going to live within my income this year even if I have to borrow money to do it."

## CRIME

A Washington matron was telling Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes about the time a burglar was arrested trying to break into her home.

"I went right down to the jail," she recalled, "and talked to that burglar, pointing out to him how evil his way of life was and how much happier he would be if he mended his ways. Yes, I talked to the man for two solid hours."

"Poor man," murmured Holmes, "poor man."

When President Theodore Roosevelt was hunting in Colorado he met a cowboy who had been with him in the Rough Riders in

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Cuba. The President asked him genially what he'd been doing with himself and the man had to confess that, "wel-l-l, I reckon I'd been in jail for a year or two for killing a man."

"How did you do it?" questioned the President.

"Thirty-eight on a forty-five frame," was the workmanlike reply.

Frederick the Great was once visiting a prison and talking with each of the prisoners in turn. There were endless tales of wronged innocence, of misunderstood motives, and victimized purity. Finally the King stopped at the cell-door of a convict who said nothing at all.

"Well," remarked the King, "I suppose you're innocent too?"

"No, Your Majesty. I'm guilty and deserve my punishment."

The King turned and called down the prison corridor.

"Here, jailer!" he shouted. "Come quickly and get rid of this rascal before he corrupts all these fine innocent people in here!"

Most historians are agreed that Napoleon's ordering the murder of the Duc d'Enghien is one of the great blots on Bonaparte's escutcheon. However, Talleyrand brought to this incident a different point of view.

"It is worse than a crime," he said; "it is a blunder."

## DOCTORS

Stephen Leacock told this story on himself:

"Years ago when I first got my Ph. D. degree, I was inordinately fond of it and used to sign myself 'Dr.' Leacock. On a trip to the

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Orient, I signed my name that way on the passenger list and was just getting my things straight in my cabin when a steward knocked and said, 'Are you Doctor Leacock?'

"I replied that I was.

"Well, the captain's compliments, doctor, and will you please come and have a look at the second stewardess' leg?"

"Realizing my obligations, I was off like a shot. But no luck! Another fellow got there ahead of me. He was a Doctor of Divinity."

A patient came to the famous English physician, Doctor Abernathy. The man complained of such profound melancholy that he was unable to sleep and was prey to ideas of suicide. After a thorough examination, the doctor said:

"Well, the only thing that I can prescribe for you is amusement. For example, go and see the comedian Grimaldi; he will do you more good than any medicine that I could suggest."

"My God," wailed the invalid, "I am Grimaldi!"

Sophie Arnould was walking one afternoon when she met a friend, a doctor of note, who had evidently been out for a few hours of sport since he had a gun under his arm.

"Ah, doctor," asked the witty actress, "a precautionary measure in case your treatment fails?"

The elder Oliver Wendell Holmes was for many years professor of anatomy at the Harvard Medical School. When he planned to give a lecture on the bone structure of the head, he caused to be set up on the platform a very much enlarged model of the sphenoid bone, that most complicated winged structure from the base of the cranium.

The day arrived for the lecture and Doctor Holmes, immaculately

garbed in his high white collar and frock coat, entered the lecture hall and mounted the platform.

"Gentlemen," he said, "today we study the structure and function of the sphenoid bone." And then he turned to this great plaster thing that was suspended on a wire from the ceiling and surveyed it with some distaste.

After a long pause, he reached for his hat and gloves.

"To hell with the sphenoid," he said and marched out of the hall.

The five doctors who were attending James Smithson, founder of the Smithsonian Institution, all had different opinions as to what was ailing the English chemist.

Their dignified wrangling finally caused Smithson to observe:

"Why don't you perform an autopsy to discover what is the matter with me? I am dying to know what my ailment is."

#### ON GEORGE IV'S PHYSICIANS

*The King employs three doctor's daily,  
Willis, Heberden, and Baillie;  
All exceeding clever men,  
Baillie, Willis, Heberden;  
But doubtful which most sure to kill is—  
Baillie, Heberden, or Willis.*

A famous English physician in the early 19th century was Doctor Friend of whom there are many good stories.

Coming home from a convivial dinner party one evening the Doctor was met at his door by a servant who told him to attend a lady dangerously ill. Cursing his profession soundly, he set off for the patient's dwelling. With some little difficulty he went or was led to the bedside of the patient, where, holding fast to the bedpost with one hand, he seized with the other the lady's wrist.

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Alas, all attempts to note the pulsations were vain and the Doctor only mumbled, "Drunk, by Jove! Drunk!"

"Oh, madam," cried her maid, when the Doctor had left, "what a wonderful man! How soon he discovered what was the matter with you!"

One of the leading arbiters of the fashionable world in the late 18th century was the famous "Beau" Nash, who was also something of a wit. Once when he was ill the doctor asked him if he had followed his prescription.

"No, doctor," he replied. "If I had, I should have broken my neck for I threw it out of my chamber window."

Robert Smith, a brother of Sydney Smith and an ex-Advocate-General, was arguing with a physician on the relative merits of their professions.

"I don't say all lawyers are thieves," said the doctor, "but you'll have to admit that your profession does not make angels of men."

"No," answered Smith. "You doctors certainly have the best of us there!"

Culture is what your butcher would have if he were a surgeon.

*Mary Pettibone Poole*

Oliver Wendell Holmes practiced medicine before he became a writer. However, as a doctor, he was not too successful since people were inclined to doubt the serious purpose of a man who posted the following notice on his office door:

"Small fevers gratefully received."



## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

General Robert E. Lee once entered the camp dispensary and caught one of the doctors admiring himself in the mirror.

"Doctor," remarked the General, "you must be the happiest man in the whole world."

"Why so?" asked the surgeon, a bit sheepishly.

"Because, sir, you are in love with yourself and haven't a rival in the whole wide world."

A friend called on Alexander Pope in his last sickness. He found the dying man sitting up in a chair; the physician had just left. The friend asked Pope how he was.

"I am dying, sir," replied the poet, "of a hundred good symptoms."

The best doctor is the one you run for and can't find.

*Diderot*

The famous Kansas editor, William Allen White, liked to quote this extract from a paper of his home state:

"Our prominent townsman, Mr. Smith, is seriously ill. He is being attended twice a day by Dr. Jones in consultation with Dr. Brown. His recovery is therefore in great doubt."

The historian, Edward Gibbon, author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, was once the rival in love of a certain French physician. Both were enamoured of the beautiful Lady Elizabeth Foster.

"When Lady Elizabeth is sick of your foolish chatter," remarked the physician, "I will cure her."

"When Lady Elizabeth is dead from your prescriptions," retorted Gibbon, "I will immortalize her."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

During the French campaigns in the Low Countries, the Count de Granie was wounded in the knee. After the surgeons had cut and carved for a while, the Count sat up and asked them why they made so many incisions. They replied that they were looking for the bullet.

"Well, don't bother," remarked the Count. "I have it in my pocket."

## DOGS

A large dog obstructed the path along which Whistler and Howard Paul were walking. Whistler showed some signs of nervousness and a decided reluctance to confront the animal.

"Don't be afraid," said Paul. "Look at his tail—how it wags. When a dog wags his tail he's in good humor."

"That may be," admitted the painter, "but observe the wild glitter in his eye. I'm afraid I don't know which end to believe."

*I am His Highness' dog at Kew;  
Pray tell me, Sir, whose dog are you?*

Engraved on the collar of a dog  
which *Alexander Pope* gave to  
Frederick, Prince of Wales

Sydney Smith often expressed an antipathy to dogs. A lady once asked him to suggest a name for her dog, and he suggested "Spot."

"Why, sir," she exclaimed, "that would be hardly appropriate. My dog has a pure white coat."

"Appropriate enough," was the reply. "Out, damned Spot."

## DRINKING

The composer, Arthur Sullivan, was something of a bon vivant, but it is said that no matter how much he imbibed he never lost the sense of true pitch.

One evening, when he had drunk enough to render it difficult to identify his house from the long row of similar dwellings on each side, he went up to every door and kicked the metal shoe scrapers on the top steps. He paused at one, kicked it again and muttered:

"Ah, E flat. Home again."

Sir Wilfred Lawson, who supported anti-liquor legislation, held somewhat different sentiments when a student at the university. The young lord was called up before the head of his college who said:

"Sir, I hear that you keep a barrel of beer in your room which, as you know, is contrary to the rules of this college."

"Well, that is true, sir," replied the student, "but the truth of the matter is that my doctor has prescribed beer for my weak constitution."

"And I suppose you are becoming stronger," said the headmaster.

"Yes, sir. Indeed I am. Why, when the barrel came I could not move it an inch; but now I find that I can roll it around the room."

The English authors, G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, had been having an argument as to what caused drunkenness. To settle the question, they decided on a course of experimentation. One night they drank whisky and water and got drunk. The next night they drank gin and water and got drunk. The third night they drank brandy and water and got drunk.

"Since no matter what you mix it with," said G. K. Chesterton

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

later, "you still get drunk, it is plain that water is a most pernicious and intoxicating beverage."

Once, while on his trip to Scotland, Doctor Johnson was taking tea at Lady MacLeod's house. After she had poured out the sixteenth cup, she remarked politely that perhaps a small basin would save him trouble and would be more agreeable.

The Doctor stared at her. "I wonder, Madam," he said sharply, "why all the ladies ask me that question. It is to save themselves trouble and not me!"

The lady resumed her tasks without further ado.

Mark Twain accompanied Bill Nye when the latter went out to Nevada to take over the duties of Governor of the territory.

The news of the Governor's arrival had reached hard-drinking Carson City and a big banquet was planned at which it was decided that the two effete newcomers would be quickly "put under the table."

Drinks and speeches flowed endlessly at the banquet and one by one the participants slid gently to the floors and to deep slumber.

Finally only two men remained conscious and seated in their chairs. They were Bill Nye and Mark Twain.

"Well, Bill," remarked Twain, stretching and slowly getting up from the table, "what do you say we get out of here and go somewhere for a drink."

Douglas Jerrold liked to tell of the time that he was walking along a London street when he saw an inebriated gentleman fumbling at the door with his key.

"Damn," exclaimed the reveller, "some scoundrel has stolen the keyhole."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

The poet and dramatist, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, was once asked what kind of wine he liked best.

"Other people's," was his prompt reply.

The famous artist and illustrator of Dickens' novels, George Cruikshank, after a life of conviviality, suddenly became a teetotaler and showed all the zeal of a convert. In fact, his friends got heartily tired of his sermons on the dangers of the flowing bowl and the felicities of clear, cold water.

"Come, come, George," remarked Douglas Jerrold to him, one day when he was holding forth, "remember that water is very good anywhere—except on the brain."

"Now, gentlemen," said Richard Brinsley Sheridan to a group of his companions one evening, "are we to drink like men or like beasts?"

"Like *men*, of course," was the unanimous reply.

"Then we are going to get roaring drunk," replied Sheridan, "for beasts never drink more than they want."

Although Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas were good friends, in their famous debates they gave each other no quarter. During one of these verbal duels, Douglas sneeringly referred to the fact that he once saw Lincoln retailing whisky.

"Yes," replied Lincoln, "it is true that the first time I saw Judge Douglas I was selling whisky by the drink. I was on the inside of the bar and the Judge was on the outside: I busy selling, he busy buying."

The indignant delegation that waited on President Lincoln demanded the removal of General Grant from his command.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"But why should he be removed?" asked Lincoln.

"Because he drinks so much whisky," replied the spokesman.

"Ah! that's it," said the President softly. "By the way, gentlemen, can you tell me where Grant gets his whisky? I think I'd better send a barrel of that whisky to every general in the field."

Once, a convivial friend, at whose house Mark Twain was then visiting, asked Mark before breakfast if he would take a drink. Mark said that he'd like to, but could not, for three reasons.

"First," he said, "I am a prohibitionist; second, I never drink before breakfast; and third, I've already had four drinks."

At George H. Boughton's house in London, Whistler had occasion to climb the stairs. After a short pause a dull thudding series of noises indicated that the artist was coming down a lot faster than he went up.

As he lay sprawled at the foot of the stairs he looked up at his host and asked, "Who is your architect?"

He was informed that the man in question was Norman Shaw.

"I might have known it," moaned Whistler. "The damned teetotaler!"

In consequence of a continued bout with the bottle, Richard Brinsley Sheridan was taken ill and put under a regimen of total abstinence.

Calling some time after, the doctor asked his patient if he was attending to his advice, and was answered in the affirmative.

"That's right," said the doctor; "it's the only way to secure length of days."

"I do not doubt it," replied Sheridan, "for these last three days have been the longest in my life."

Samuel Foote, the comedian, was once approached by a nobleman notorious for his habitual drunkenness.

"Mr. Foote," said the nobleman, "I'm going to a masquerade this evening and I wonder if you could suggest a disguise?"

"Suppose you go sober, my lord," replied Foote.

Whistler was out on a walk through the English countryside with a group of friends when he and his companions stopped at a village inn. They all called for ale, and tankards were brought. After taking a sip or two, Whistler turned to the host.

"My good man," he said, "would you like to sell a great deal more ale than you do?"

"Yes, sir, I would that!"

"Then don't sell so much froth!"

One of the champion tea drinkers on record is, of course, Doctor Johnson. Twenty-seven cups are said to have been his record in one evening.

At the tea-table at Mrs. Cumberland's house, the good Doctor was in his usual form when Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was also of the company, remarked that the Doctor had drunk eleven cups.

"Sir," retorted Doctor Johnson, not entirely pleased with Sir Joshua's observation, "I did not count your glasses of wine at dinner; why should you number my cups of tea?" But then regaining his good humor, he added, laughing, "But you remind me that I lack one of a dozen. Therefore (passing his cup) I must request Mrs. Cumberland to round out the number."

William Chambers said to Sydney Smith that the Scotch really have a considerable fund of humor.

"Oh, by all means," replied Smith, "you are an immensely funny people, but I'm afraid that you need a little operating on to let the

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

fun out. I know no instrument so effectual for the purpose as the corkscrew."

The discussion turned on the merits and dangers of wine-drinking. Boswell remarked to Doctor Johnson that, when they were first acquainted, he, Boswell, was then in the habit of drinking far too much and would always wake up the next day with an acute headache.

"Nay, sir," retorted Johnson, "it was not the wine that made your head ache, but the sense that I put in it."

"What!" exclaimed Boswell, "will sense make the head ache?"

"Yes," replied Johnson, "when it is not used to it."

When Oliver Cromwell was having dinner with some of his henchmen, he happened to drop the corkscrew. As he was bending under the table groping around for that most necessary piece of equipment, a servant entered and announced a visiting deputation of clergymen.

"Send them away," said the Lord Protector of Great Britain and Ireland. "Tell them we are busy seeking the Lord."

When President Eliot was head of Harvard College, there was a young student in the freshman class whose capacity for absorbing alcohol and whose subsequent exploits were so noteworthy as to reach the presidential ear.

One morning, while crossing the Yard, the President met the freshman.

"Young man," he demanded, fixing the youth with a piercing glance, "do you drink?"

"Why . . . er . . . no," stammered the young man, "not so early in the morning, thank you, sir."



## EATING

Sir Walter Scott and his wife were taking a stroll in the meadows of Abbotsford, his country home. They stopped to gaze at a field where a herd of sheep were grazing.

"It's no wonder," exclaimed Sir Walter, "that poets and philosophers have always made the lamb the emblem of peace and innocence."

"They are indeed delightful little creatures," agreed his wife, "—especially with mint sauce."

Irvin S. Cobb was once eating at an inn in Pennsylvania and asked the waiter about the history of the place.

"I suppose," said he, "that this place goes back to Revolutionary times."

"Yes," replied the waiter, "it's very old. There are lots of stories connected with the place."

"Well, tell me," said Cobb, "the legend of that curious old mince pie that you brought in."

Samuel Johnson was dining at a London house where, in honor of his recent return from Scotland, the hostess served a special Scottish dish. The hostess inquired pleasantly how he liked it.

"Madam," he retorted rudely, "it is a dish fit only for pigs."

"Pray, sir," said the lady, "let me help you to some more."

Cardinal Fesch, Napoleon's uncle, was a great gourmet. Once when he was to give a banquet, he received in the morning a gift

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

of two magnificent turbot. The Cardinal racked his brains on how to serve them. To serve both the fish would appear ridiculous, but he was most anxious to have the credit of possessing both. He consulted his *chef*.

"Be of good faith, your Eminence," was the *chef's* reply; "both turbot shall appear and both shall enjoy the reception which is their due."

The guests arrived; the dinner was served. One of the turbot was carried in after the soup. Unanimous and enthusiastic exclamations from the assembled gastronomes. The *maitre d'hotel* and his attendants lifted up the platter when all of a sudden someone lost their equilibrium and attendants and turbot all rolled on the floor. At this sad spectacle, the guests became as pale as death and a solemn silence reigned.

With unruffled calm, the *maitre d'hotel* turned to an attendant. "Bring in another turbot," he ordered.

Caruso entered a restaurant near the Metropolitan Opera House and spied Ernestine Schumann-Heink seated at a table. He went over to join her and noticed that she had an enormous steak before her.

"Stina," exclaimed Caruso, "you're not going to eat all that alone?"

"No," replied the contralto, "not alone; with potatoes."

The eminent American lawyer, Rufus Choate, was once crossing the Atlantic and came in off deck, exclaiming:

"Well, it is better to have lunched and lost than never to have lunched at all."

Doctor Johnson fancied himself as somewhat of an epicure and liked to be complimented on his perception in matters of taste.

Once, when he had dined at a friend's house but on rather plain fare, he did not deny himself the pleasure of remarking to the host:

"Well, sir, this was a good dinner enough, to be sure; but it was not a dinner to *ask* a man to."

An English admirer of Sir Walter Scott, when visiting in Scotland, wrote a note to the author in which he said that he would like to have the honor of meeting the "great lion of the North." Sir Walter immediately wrote a note inviting him to dinner, saying "that the lion of the North is best worth seeing at feeding time."

A group of people were discussing friendship, when Sydney Smith told the following story:

"At dinner once, I heard a lady say in a low voice, 'No gravy'; I had never seen her before but I turned to her suddenly and said, 'Madam, I have been looking for a person who disliked gravy all my life; let us swear eternal friendship.'"

A pedantic schoolmaster once called on the French philosopher, Descartes, and was ushered into the latter's presence just as he was finishing a most sumptuous meal.

"What!" cried the schoolmaster, surveying the débris of the feast; "do philosophers regale themselves with such dainties?"

"Why not?" retorted Descartes. "Do you suppose that nature has provided all good things for none but fools?"

An eager hostess was overjoyed to number among her guests at dinner the eminent Dean of St. Patrick's, Jonathan Swift. She deluged him with attentions.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"My dear sir," she prattled, "tell me what you'll have. Would you like rabbit pie, meat pie, or an oyster pie?"

"Any pie at all, madam," retorted the Dean. "Any pie but a magpie."

The daughter of Rufus Choate, Helen Choate Bell, was well known throughout Boston society for her sharp wit. She once remarked that the automobile would divide mankind into two classes—the quick and the dead.

When a friend of hers went visiting on Cape Cod, Mrs. Bell later described the sojourn succinctly. "She ate so many clams that her stomach rose and fell with the tide."

Ordering a lamb-chop in a restaurant one day, the American humorist, Oliver Herford, surveyed what the waiter brought him with distaste.

"See here," he said to the waiter, "I ordered a lamb-chop."

"Yes, sir, there it is."

"Ah, so it is," said Herford, looking closer; "I thought it was a crack in the plate."

The story is told of Lord Chesterfield sitting down to dinner and noticing that the plates were not clean. When he took his servant to task for this negligence, the servant impertinently replied, "that everyone ate a peck of dirt in his lifetime anyway."

"Perhaps," replied Chesterfield, "but not all at one meal."

The composer, Rossini, was a star performer with the knife and fork, and once, having dined at a table that could hardly have been

described as "groaning with good things," was dismayed to hear the host affably remark:

"I do hope, Signor, that you will again do us the honor of dining here."

"Certainly," replied Rossini with enthusiasm, "let's start now!"

Besides being a great lover of tobacco, Charles Lamb was a connoisseur of all kinds of cheeses; and like most of the breed, he liked his cheese venerable.

One day, to his delight, he discovered a particularly ripe Stilton; the shopkeeper asked him if he would like it wrapped.

"No, thank you," replied Lamb, "just give me a string and I'll lead it home."

## EDUCATION

Professor George Lyman Kitteredge of Harvard, the Shakespearean scholar, was once annoyed by the students noisily preparing to leave the class the moment the bell sounded.

"Just a minute, gentlemen," he said, "I have a few more pearls to cast."

A poster that Professor John Stuart Blackie of Edinburgh had posted on the door of his lecture room indicated that he was indisposed.

"Professor Blackie will not meet his classes today," the note read.

One of the students couldn't resist the temptation of pasting a bit of matching paper over the "c" in "classes."

When the professor heard of it he had still another letter obliterated, the "l."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

A guide was showing a group of tourists around some of the Oxford colleges.

Pointing out Trinity Hall, he said, "This is where the famous Benjamin Jowett, the translator of Plato and the president of the college, lives."

The tourists stopped in their tracks and gaped. Then the guide picked up a handful of gravel and threw it against an upper window. Immediately, a large face, crimson with fury, appeared at the window.

"And that," said the guide, "is Professor Jowett."

*I come first. My name is Jowett.  
There's no knowledge but I know it.  
I am the Master of this College.  
What I don't know is not knowledge.*

Explaining his forced retirement from West Point for failing to answer an examination question, Whistler remarked, "If silicon had been a gas, I should have been a soldier!"

Nevertheless, he was proud of his West Point cadetship. When informed that football had been introduced there, he exclaimed, "Good God, a West Point cadet to be rolled in the mud by a Harvard junior!"

Professor Charles Townsend Copeland of Harvard was once asked why he persisted in living in his pokey little rooms at the top of Hollis Hall.

"Well," he replied, "it's the only place in Cambridge where God alone is above me." Then he added, "He's busy—but He's quiet."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education.

*Mark Twain*

The 18th century statesman and peer, Lord Sandwich, was once on a brief holiday in Paris. While there he decided to take a course of dancing lessons from a famous dancing master who was at that time the rage of the French court. Lord Sandwich faithfully attended the lessons and it seemed to him that he made great progress.

At the conclusion of the last lesson, he asked the dancing master if there was any favor that he could do for him to show his appreciation.

"Yes, my lord," replied the dancing master. "I would take it as a particular favor if your lordship would never tell anyone of whom you learned to dance."

## EPITAPHS

*Here lies my wife:  
Here let her lie!  
Now she's at rest,  
And so am I.*

*John Dryden*

### EPITAPH ON SIR JOHN STRANGE, LAWYER

*Here lies an honest lawyer,  
And that is Strange.*

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

### ON PETER ROBINSON

*Here lies the preacher, judge, and poet, Peter,  
Who broke the laws of God, and man, and meter.*

*Francis Jeffrey*

### ON SIR JOHN VANBRUGH, ARCHITECT

*Under this stone, reader, survey  
Dead Sir John Vanbrugh's house of clay.  
Lie heavy on him, Earth! for he  
Laid many heavy loads on thee.*

*Abel Evans*

### ON SAMUEL BUTLER'S MONUMENT

*While Butler, needy wretch, was yet alive,  
No generous patron would a dinner give.  
See him, when starved to death and turned to dust,  
Presented with a monumental bust.  
The poet's fate is here in emblem shown—  
He asked for bread, and he received a stone.*

*Rev. Samuel Wesley*

The celebrated historian and author of the ideal system of ethics, David Hume, is buried in Edinburgh in a circular tomb. The epitaph reads as follows:

*Within this circular idea  
Called vulgarly a tomb,  
The ideas and impressions lie,  
That constituted Hume.*



## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Robert Ingersoll, the noted lecturer and agnostic, once asked Henry Ward Beecher to write a suitable epitaph for him. Beecher took a slip of paper, wrote something quickly on it, and passed it to Ingersoll.

It read, *Robert Burns*.

*Here lies David Garrick, describe him who can?  
An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man;  
On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting;  
'Twas only that when he was off he was acting.*

*Oliver Goldsmith*

*Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,  
Who wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll.*

*David Garrick*

### EPITAPH FOR DR. FULLER, THE CELEBRATED DIVINE

*Here lies Fuller's earth.*

### EPITAPH ON HIMSELF, WHO WOULD NOT BE BURIED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

*Heroes and Kings, your distance keep;  
In peace let one poor poet sleep,  
Who never flattered folks like you:  
Let Horace blush and Virgil too.*

*Alexander Pope*

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

### EPITAPH FOR HIMSELF

*Life is a jest, and all things show it.  
I thought so once, but now I know it.*

*John Gay*

### EPITAPH ON CHARLES KNIGHT

*Good Knight.*

*Douglas Jerrold*

## EXERCISE

A little while before his death, Lord Chesterfield was accustomed to drive out every afternoon. Since his lordship was so infirm the horses had to be led step by step. Once he met an acquaintance who congratulated him on being able to be out taking the air.

"I thank you kindly, sir," replied Chesterfield, "but I am really rehearsing my funeral."

The French Ambassador, Jusserand, was visiting President Theodore Roosevelt. The athletic President, seeking to entertain his guest, invited him to play tennis. They played two sets. Then he suggested a little sprint around the lawn. They sprinted. Then a little workout with the medicine-ball. The President turned to his guest.

"What would you like to do now?" he inquired.

"If it's just the same with you, Mr. President," Jusserand retorted, "I'd like to lie down and die."

Someone asked Oscar Wilde if he ever indulged in outdoor sports.

"Oh yes," replied Oscar, "I like to play dominos at a sidewalk cafe in Paris."

Rarely, did Doctor Johnson indulge in the pastime of hunting. However, once when visiting some friends in the country, he was prevailed upon to mount a horse and follow the hounds. When he returned from the chase, he swung his heavy bulk out of the saddle and upon regaining *terra firma*, said, puffing:

"It is very strange, and very melancholy, that the paucity of human pleasures should persuade us ever to call hunting one of them."

## FISHING

President Coolidge was officiating at the laying of a cornerstone. He turned a shovelful or two of dirt with the golden ceremonial shovel while the crowd watched with reverent silence. The President paused, peered down in the hole.

"That's a fine fishworm," he remarked.

Mark Twain had been on a trip to the Maine woods and, on the train, had engaged a New Englander in conversation.

"It may be the closed season on fishing up here, but between you and me," said Mark, "I've got two hundred pounds of the finest rock bass you ever laid eyes on, out there in the baggage car."

"Waal," drawled the local type, "that's interestin', but d'ye happen to know who I am?"

"No," replied the genial Mark. "Who are you?"

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"I'm the State Game Warden," was the reply.

"Well, doesn't that beat the Dutch," said Mark, "D'ye know who I am, Warden? I'm the damnedest liar in the United States!"

A fishing-rod is a stick with a hook at one end and a fool at the other.

*Samuel Johnson*

### SIR ISAAK WALTON

*The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet  
Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.*

*Byron*

Calvin Coolidge was an ardent fisherman and fishing in the River Brule was one of his favorite ways of relaxing from his presidential duties.

Returning from one of these excursions to Washington, the President was asked if he had had any luck.

"Well," replied the President, "I estimate that there are forty-five thousand fish in the River Brule and, although I haven't caught them all yet, I've intimidated them."

## FOOLS

A jester at the court of Philip II of Spain had a notebook in which he entered the names of persons who, in his estimation, committed foolish acts.

One day a Moor in the King's employ was entrusted with a large sum of money with which to travel to Arabia to purchase horses. The jester wrote down the King's name in the book.

Later the King was examining the book and called upon the jester to explain the reason for the entry.

"Sire," he replied, "it was an error on your part to give so much money to the Moor—you'll never see it again."

"And if he does come back?"

"Then I'll cross out your name and replace it with his."

A fool always finds one still more foolish to admire him.

*Boileau*

David Hume, the philosopher, accompanied by his wife and his several children, happened in the course of a discussion with Charles Lamb to make the unfortunate remark "that one fool makes many."

"Aye, Mr. Hume," answered Lamb. Then seeming to change the subject, he added innocently, "My, but you have a fine family!"

It was a rare occasion when Sydney Smith lost his temper. One day, however, a gardener exasperated him to such a point that he finally called the man a fool.

"God never made a fool," growled the gardener.

"That is quite true," replied Smith, "but man was not long in making a fool of himself."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

### FRIENDS

Boswell once asked Doctor Johnson if a man may go to a friend's house without being invited when he knows that there is to be a party of mutual friends there.

"No, he may not," replied Johnson. "They may be invited for the express purpose of abusing him."

Oscar Wilde once reproved Whistler for antagonizing all his friends by insulting remarks and rude behavior. But the painter had a ready answer.

"It is commonplace, not to say vulgar," said he, "to quarrel with your enemies. Quarrel with your friends! *That's* the thing to do!"

Talleyrand was speaking in abusive terms of one of his associates, M. de Montrond.

"But, monsieur," his secretary remonstrated, "I thought that M. de Montrond was one of your pets."

Talleyrand smiled. "He is," he replied. "I love him for his vices—as he does me."

For many years, Beau Brummell and the Prince Regent were close friends. Whatever the cause of their ultimate estrangement, they suddenly became complete strangers to one another.

Brummell was out walking with a friend when the Prince passed. The Prince bowed to Brummell's companion but pointedly ignored him. After he had passed, the "Beau" turned to his friend.

"Pray, who's your fat friend?" he asked.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Many a man who thinks to found a home discovers that he has merely opened a tavern for his friends.

*Norman Douglas*

President Lincoln happened to say some kind words about the Confederates in the presence of a woman of very vociferous patriotic principles.

"Why, Mr. President," she said, "how can you speak kindly of your enemies when you should rather destroy them?"

"What, madam, do I not destroy them when I make them my friends?" replied Lincoln.

## FUTURE LIFE

At Queen Victoria's court, during the early part of her reign, some of the young ladies-in-waiting were discussing the satisfactions of the future life. The Queen sat quietly at her embroidery, listening to them. One remarked finally that one of the great pleasures would be the opportunity of meeting notable figures of the past—Abraham, Isaac, and King David.

The young Queen looked up thoughtfully from her work and, after a moment's silence, said with great dignity and decision:

"I will *not* meet David!"

Talleyrand went to call on his friend, De Montholon, who was seriously ill.

"Well, how are you today?" asked Talleyrand.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"Oh," groaned De Montholon, "I feel the tortures of the Damned!"

"What . . . already?" murmured Talleyrand.

Doctor Johnson was in a party of gentlemen who were discussing a recently deceased member of their circle, a man of profligate tastes and habits. The good Doctor would hear no good of the man, but one of his friends defended the deceased as a man of wit and added that one must admit that he had some lights.

"Just enough," replied the Doctor sternly, "to light him to Hell."

When Lord Erskine, the eminent advocate, heard that a friend had died with a fortune of over two hundred thousand pounds, he remarked:

"Well, that's a very pretty sum to begin life in the next world with."

A lady at a dinner party evidently felt that she was missing something when she noticed that Mark Twain was not taking part in a discussion of eternal life and future punishment.

Finally she leaned over to him and said, "Mr. Twain, why do you not say anything? I want your opinion."

To which Twain replied gravely, "Madam, you must excuse me. I am silent of necessity; I have friends in both places."

Samuel Johnson scorned those ostentatious moralists who claimed that attention to dress and appearance is incompatible with Christian principles.

"A man who cannot get into Heaven in a green coat," he remarked, "will not find his way thither any the sooner in a gray one."



## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Robert Dale Owen once read a paper to Lincoln on a very abstruse aspect of Spiritualism. Lincoln listened patiently until the author asked for his opinion, when he replied with a yawn:

"Well, for those who like that sort of thing I should think it is just about the sort of thing they would like."

## GENIUS

Professor Albert Einstein was traveling by train to Princeton. In the dining-car he discovered that he had forgotten his glasses and could not read the menu without them. So he asked the waiter to read the menu for him.

The waiter took the card, turning it this way and that. Finally he turned to the proponent of the theory of relativity and said, "Ah can't make it out, boss. Ah'm afraid Ah'm just as ignorant as you am."

One must have loved a woman of genius in order to comprehend what happiness there is in loving and marrying a fool.

*Talleyrand*, speaking of his wife.

"Do you think genius hereditary?" asked an admiring young woman of Whistler one afternoon.

"I can't tell, madam," replied Whistler; "Heaven has granted me no offspring."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

### H O R S E S

While he was a cadet at West Point, Whistler had considerable trouble in the cavalry drill. On one occasion, he asked the orderly the name of the horse that he had just ridden.

"His name is Quaker," replied the orderly.

"Well," Whistler promptly retorted, "he's no Friend!"

Abraham Lincoln and a judge, an old friend of his, were joking about horse trading, when Lincoln said:

"Well, Judge, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll trade horses with you under these conditions. Neither of us will see the other's horse until it is produced here in the courtyard of this hotel. If either backs out of the agreement, he forfeits twenty-five dollars to the other."

It was agreed, and both left to find a horse for the trade. A crowd collected in the hotel courtyard to watch the fun. When the judge appeared a great laugh rose up at the dejected looking nag that he led. It was a bag of bones and blind in both eyes. Then Lincoln appeared with a carpenter's saw-horse on his shoulder. Setting the saw-horse on the ground, he surveyed the judge's horse.

"Well, Judge," he said disgustedly, "this is the first time that I ever got the worst of it in a horse trade."

During one of his many visits to England, Mark Twain went to the races at Epsom Downs. He met a friend there who was sporting a very glum face and who admitted that he had lost every penny that he had brought with him. He went on to say that if Mark didn't loan him his railroad fare back to London he'd have to walk.

"Well," said Mark, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'm just about

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

broke myself but you can hide under the seat on the train, and when the conductor comes by I'll hide you with my legs."

And so it was agreed that the two friends would cheat the railway out of a fare. However, when Mark went into the station, he bought two tickets, but without the friend's knowledge.

So they got on the train, the friend was duly ensconced under the seat, and the train got under way. In a short time the ticket-collector came around and Mark handed the two tickets to him. The official looked all around.

"I'm sorry, sir, but where is the other person?" he inquired.

Mark smiled, tapped his head knowingly with his forefinger.

"That's my friend's ticket," he explained gently, and then indicated the cramped immobile figure beneath. "He's a little eccentric and prefers to ride under the seat."

Abraham Lincoln was fond of telling the story of the Kentucky lad who was trotting a horse back and forth for a prospective buyer to look over.

"But look here," said the man, "this here horse has got splints."

"Mister," replied the lad, scratching his head, "I don't know what splints is, but if it's good for him he's got 'em, and if it ain't good for him he ain't got 'em."

## HOTELS

Monty Woolley spent a weekend at a New York hotel that one supposes he did not return to in a hurry. Upon leaving, the actor presented the manager with a bouquet of spring flowers, saying "These are for your phone operators."

"Why, what a nice compliment," said the manager.

"Compliment hell," retorted Monty. "I thought they were dead!"

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

What Simeon Ford, the proprietor of the old Grand Union Hotel in New York, had to say about hotels in particular might readily apply to almost any business.

"You don't need to know anything about a hotel to run one," he said. "You just open up and the customers tell you how to run it."

As with many crowned heads, Joseph II, Holy Roman Emperor, was accustomed to travel incognito and thus avoid many wearisome formalities. Once, while traveling in the Netherlands, he was obliged to put up at a crowded inn and was lodged in a shed. The next day, the landlord presented the Emperor with his bill for ten pennies for himself and each person with him, which His Majesty immediately paid.

Later, as they were preparing to depart, one of the members of the Emperor's suite disclosed his identity to the astonished and mortified host.

"Don't think of it another moment," said the courtier consolingly. "Traveling about as he does, His Majesty is accustomed to such adventures and will not give it a moment's thought."

"Very likely," replied the landlord wistfully, "but I shall. I can never forgive myself for having an emperor in the house and letting him off for ten pennies!"

The Russian writer, Maxim Gorky, was at one time living in a lodging house in southern Italy. He complained to the wife of the owner that his bed was infested with vermin which were driving him out of his mind.

The indignant landlady replied, "No, sir, that is impossible. We have not a single bug in the house!"

"No, madam," retorted Gorky, "not single. They are all married and have very large families too."

## IDENTITY

The Civil War General, William T. Sherman, who was rather deaf, was once attending a reception when he noticed a man who looked familiar to him.

"Who are you?" asked the General.

"I make your shirts, sir," replied the man.

"Of course, of course!" exclaimed Sherman, and turning to the others, he said, "Gentlemen, allow me to present Major Schurtz."

A man once approached Lord Chelmsford, Lord Chancellor of England, on a London street and exclaimed: "Mr. Jones, I believe."

With the appropriate icy stare, the nobleman replied, "Well, the man who believes that can believe anything."

In a playful mood one evening, Edward VII, when Prince of Wales, and the Duke of Marlborough stopped their carriage and the Prince gave an urchin a five-pound note to kick a policeman in the shins. The lad earned the money and ran like the wind, but the bobby finally caught him.

Fearing that they would get the young fellow into serious trouble the Prince tried to explain the situation to the policeman. But the officer of the law, suffering injury to both his dignity and his shins, haled all three into Magistrate's Court.

To the question, "Who are you?" the Prince replied, "The Prince of Wales."

The Duke of Marlborough then revealed his identity.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Turning to the youngster, the Magistrate said, "And who may you be?"

The boy, apparently wise in the ways of the law, took his cue, as he thought, and answered with a piping, "I'm the Archbishop of Canterbury."

Long before the South showed signs of weakening, President Lincoln was besieged by a group of citizens who called upon him to emancipate the slaves. When Lincoln's arguments failed to convince his callers that proclaiming the slaves free would not make them free, he was forced to resort to an analogy to make his point clearer.

"How many legs will a sheep have if you call the tail a leg?" he asked.

"Five," replied the spokesman.

"You are mistaken," said Lincoln, "for calling a tail a leg doesn't make it one."

The part in a new play once demanded that the actor, John Drew, shave off his mustache. Soon after, he met Max Beerbohm in a theater lobby but could not immediately recall just who he was. Max Beerbohm's memory was better.

"Oh, Mr. Drew," he exclaimed, "I'm afraid that you don't know me without your mustache."

The late Sir Walter Raleigh (1861-1922), eminent writer and English man of letters, was once invited to give a series of lectures at Princeton. Professor Root was delegated to meet Sir Walter at the station but since they had never met, had no way of recognizing him. The train pulled in, and Professor Root spotted a likely individual standing on the platform.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but am I addressing Sir Walter Raleigh?"

"No," was the retort, "I'm sorry. I'm Christopher Columbus. Sir Walter Raleigh is in the smoking car with Queen Elizabeth."

Mark Twain was once talking to some gullible admirers who were hanging on to every word he said.

"Well," he drawled, "very few people realize that I was one of a set of twins. The nurse accidentally drowned one of us in the bathtub but no one could tell *which* one. Everyone thought that I was the one that lived but I wasn't. It was my brother who lived and I was the one that was drowned!"

A Mrs. Austin was explaining to the assembled company that she was absolutely no relation to Jane Austen, the celebrated novelist and author of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Whereupon, Sydney Smith spoke up and said, "Well, I *always* let it be inferred that I am the son of Adam Smith!"

## LANGUAGE

Traveling in Egypt, George Ade went out to see the Pyramids and the Sphinx; there he met Mark Twain. Mark's guide was an old, toothless, decrepit creature, looking half as old as the Sphinx himself. The two humorists compared notes on their travels and on Egypt. Mark complained that, although he had studied some Arabic, he couldn't understand a word his old guide said.

"No wonder," replied Ade. "You see he's talking gum-Arabic."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Once, dining in a Paris restaurant, Whistler noted an elderly English gentleman endeavoring to make himself understood by the waiter through the medium of some rather elementary guide-book French.

Whistler politely volunteered to interpret.

"Sir," replied the gentleman icily, "I can give my order without any assistance!"

"Can you indeed?" remarked Whistler airily. "I fancied the contrary just now when I heard you desire the waiter to bring you a pair of stairs."

Bernard Shaw, when a young man, was traveling in Italy with a party of English friends when they stopped *en route* for a bite to eat at the railway restaurant in Milan.

"Our waiter," he afterwards related, "spoke no language other than his own. When the moment came to pay and rush for our train, we were unable to make him understand that we wanted not one bill but twenty-four separate ones. My friends insisted that I must know Italian. I racked my brain for chips from the language of Dante in vain. All of a sudden, a line from *The Huguenots* flashed into my memory: 'Ognuno per se; per tutti il ciel' (Every man for himself and Heaven for all). I declaimed it with triumphant success. The army of waiters was doubled up with laughter and my fame as an Italian scholar has been on the increase ever since."

An American traveling abroad was boasting to Prince Otto von Bismarck of the accomplishments of his son.

"Yes," added the American, "and besides, he speaks seven languages!"

"Indeed," remarked Bismarck. "What a wonderful head-waiter he would make!"



An importunate courtier was seeking to convince Louis XIV of France that he would make a most suitable ambassador to Spain.

"Do you speak Spanish?" asked the King.

"No," the would-be ambassador had to confess.

So he thereupon embarked upon a most thorough-going course of study of the Spanish language, devoting all his time to it for many months. When he finally considered that he had an expert knowledge of the language, he presented himself again to Louis, reopening the subject of the ambassadorship.

"Oh yes," said the King. "I remember. Do you know the language well?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"I congratulate you," replied the King. "Now you can read *Don Quixote* in the original."

## LAWYERS

When Clarence Darrow was a young lawyer, he was presenting a suit for damages in a civil court in a small town. The jury that was selected appeared to be even lower than average in intelligence. However, one man seemed much superior to the rest and would probably be elected foreman by the jury—according to the local legal custom. Throughout the case, therefore, Darrow concentrated on this man, and addressed all his oratory to him.

The case finally went to the jury. After an unusually long wait, the jury filed in, and Darrow saw that his surmise had been correct. The object of his attention headed the procession as foreman.

"Gentlemen," said the judge, "have you reached a decision?"

"No, Your Honor," answered the foreman, "we've come back to ask for some information. There are two words which have been used throughout this trial which we don't know the meaning of."

"What are they?" asked the judge.

"One word is 'plaintiff' and the other is 'defendant.'"

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

The young man who kept moving about in the rear of the courtroom, lifting chairs and looking under desks, finally caused a frown to cloud the judge's face. Looking up and at the disturber, Judge Elbert Henry Gary of Chicago, later head of the United States Steel Corporation, called out, "Young man, you are making a great deal of unnecessary noise. What are you about?"

"Your honor," replied the young man, "I have lost my overcoat, and am trying to find it."

"Well," mused the venerable jurist, "people often lose whole suits in here without making all that disturbance."

Ambassador Choate, Senator Westcott, and Speaker Reed were conversing when Mr. Choate said in great seriousness:

"I have not gambled, drunk whisky, or attended a horse race for twenty-eight years."

"Good Heavens, man," said Senator Westcott with admiration, "how I wish I could say the same thing!"

"Why don't you?" asked Mr. Reed nonchalantly. "Choate did."

When he was very old and feeble, Chief Justice John Marshall was in his study one day and climbed up on a chair to reach some books in the top shelf of the bookcase. As he pulled out a volume, the whole row of legal tomes came too, knocking the poor old Chief Justice off the chair. His secretary rushed into the room to see what had caused all the racket. Marshall was arising from the floor surrounded by a heap of books.

"Well, well," he remarked, dusting himself off, "I've been laying down the law for a good many years now, but this is the first time the law has ever laid me down!"

When Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the dramatist and politician, was lying on his deathbed, the solicitor, a gentleman who had been much favored in wills, came to call on him.

When a friend called later he found Sheridan in a rather depressed state.

"My friends," Sheridan remarked, "have been very kind in calling on me and offering their services in their respective ways: Dick W. has just been here with his *will-making* face."

Frank B. Carpenter, the artist who painted the Cabinet as it assembled to hear the Emancipation Proclamation, is credited with relaying one of Lincoln's stories.

"One evening," he related, "the President brought some friends in to see my picture. The conversation gravitated to the subject of law and one point in a minor argument reminded the President of a judge he knew when he first started out in his career.

"This judge," the President said, 'held the strongest ideas of rigid government and close construction that I ever encountered. It was said of him on one occasion that he would hang a man for blowing his nose in the street, but he would quash the indictment if it failed to specify which hand he blew it with.'

Judge Samuel Seabury was once approached by a young lawyer who aspired to a legislative post. Not positive of the young man's integrity, Judge Seabury said, "If you will give your word that you won't steal when you get to Albany, I'll do what I can to help you go there."

The lawyer stood, drew himself to his fullest height, and spoke down his nose.

"I go to Albany," he said with great dignity, "absolutely unpledged, or I don't go at all."

A well-known lawyer followed George Ade as an after-dinner speaker. He rose from his chair, smiling, thrust his hands deep into his pockets, cleared his throat once and said:

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"Doesn't it strike the company as a little unusual that a professional humorist should be funny?"

When the laughter had died down, Ade, choosing to remain comfortably seated, spoke up:

"And doesn't it strike the company as a little unusual that a lawyer should have his hands in his own pockets?"

At a public dinner in Boston, Chief Justice Storey toasted the guest of honor, Edward Everett, in the following words:

"Fame follows merit where Everett goes."

Everett arose and promptly replied, "To whatever heights judicial learning may attain in this country, it will never get above one Storey."

When James G. Blaine ran for the Presidency in 1884, a friend of his went to see the great legal light, Roscoe Conkling, to ask him to campaign for Blaine.

"I can't," replied Conkling. "I've retired from criminal practice."

At a court in which Lincoln was a visitor, the judge was calling through the docket for the first time, in order to dispose of such cases that could be expedited, when he came across a long bill in chancery.

The judge turned to the lawyer who had written it and inquired, "Why, Brother Snap, how did you rake up enough energy to write such a long bill?"

"Dunno, Jedge," replied the lawyer, not knowing what to expect next.

"Astonishing, ain't it?" commented the judge, holding the top of the paper above his head and letting the bottom unfold almost to the floor, "Brother Snap did it. Wonderful—eh, Lincoln?"

"There probably is an explanation for it," replied Lincoln, pre-

paring the court for another of his analogies. "I knew a preacher once who used to write very long sermons. He said that he just got to writin' and was too lazy to stop."

When Lloyd George was a young lawyer in Wales, he one day gave a lift in his carriage to a little Welsh girl. He talked to her about various things but, try as he might, he could scarcely get a word out of her. Her vocabulary seemed limited to *yes* and *no*.

Some days later he met the little girl's mother and she mentioned that her daughter had told her of riding with him. She went on to say that the little girl also said, "I couldn't talk with Mr. George for I know that he charges a fee when you talk with him and I had no money."

A butcher once sued Daniel Webster for a long-standing bill. One day Webster met the butcher on the street and asked why he had stopped sending around for his order.

"Well, Mr. Webster, I didn't think that you would want to deal with me after I had sued you."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Webster, "sue me all you want, but for heaven's sake, don't try to starve me to death."

John Marshall was pleading a case when he was fined thirty dollars for contempt of court for making a slighting reference to the presiding judge.

In reply to the judge, Marshall made a low bow and the following apology:

"Your Honor, I've the greatest respect for this court and for the judge who presides over it. I intend to carry out every wish of the court and will pay the fine immediately.

"However, as it so happens, I haven't got the full amount of thirty dollars with me at the moment and since no one in the courtroom

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

knows me better than yourself, Your Honor, I must ask you to lend me that amount."

The judge cleared his throat, turned to the clerk, and remarked, hastily, "Clerk, remit the fine. The United States Government can better afford to lose thirty dollars than I can!"

On his deathbed, Lord Tenterden, the famous English judge, was heard to murmur:

"Gentlemen of the Jury, you will now consider your verdict."

## LECTURING

Thomas Henry Huxley, the great biologist, was giving a lecture, and at the close asked his hearers whether he had succeeded in making himself clear.

One person stood up and said, "Yes, sir, except one part during which you stood between me and the black board."

"Really?" replied Huxley. "Well, I did my best to make myself clear but evidently could not make myself transparent."

The famous lawyer, Clarence Darrow, delivered a lecture at a woman's club. Afterwards the club president approached him and started to gush enthusiastically.

"Oh, Mr. Darrow," she exclaimed, "how can we ever show our gratitude and appreciation to you!"

"My dear woman," replied Darrow, "ever since the Phoenicians invented money, there has been only one answer to that question."

Professor Gilbert Murray, the classical scholar, accepted an invitation to address the inmates of an insane asylum. When he arrived, the superintendent warned him that often a member of the audience interrupted the speaker but that he was to ignore anything like that and proceed as if nothing had happened.

Everything was peaceful until the professor was very near the end of his lecture. Then a woman sprang up in the middle of the hall and shrieked, "My God! I can't stand this another minute!"

She was promptly escorted out of the hall by attendants and all went well for the rest of the evening.

Later, in apologizing for the woman's behavior, the superintendent said, "I hope it didn't disturb you too much."

"Oh, no," the professor assured him, "you had prepared me, so I really didn't mind at all."

"Well, I was sorry for your sake," went on the superintendent; "but we were pleased as it was the first lucid interval that the woman has had for three years."

Mark Twain, in making an after-dinner speech, once said:

"Speaking of fresh eggs, I'm reminded of the town of Squash. In my early lecturing days I went to Squash to lecture in Temperance Hall, arriving in the afternoon. The town seemed poorly billed. I thought I'd find out if the people knew anything at all about what was in store for them. So I turned in at the general store.

"'Good afternoon, friend,' I said to the storekeeper. 'Any entertainment here tonight to help a stranger while away an evening?'

"The storekeeper, who was sorting mackerel, straightened up, wiped his hands on his apron, and said:

"'I expect there's goin' to be a lecture. I been sellin' eggs all day.'"

Soon after arriving at a small town where he was scheduled to lecture, Mark Twain dropped into a barber shop for a shave.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"Are you a stranger here?" asked the barber, knowing perfectly well that he was.

"Yes," replied Mark Twain, "This is the first time I've been here."

"You came just at the right time, then," the barber informed him, "Mark Twain is going to read and lecture at the town hall tonight. Are you going?"

"I suppose so."

"Have you bought your ticket?"

"No, not yet."

"But everything will be sold out. You may have to stand."

"I wouldn't be at all surprised," said Mark Twain, "I have yet to see the time when I could sit when that fellow lectures."

Mark Twain was just beginning a lecture when the steam pipes began to give forth the most unearthly racket. Every time he opened his mouth to speak, the pipes beat him to it with a loud bang. Finally, he roared above the din:

"Will someone please go down in the cellar and tell that janitor to stop gnashing his teeth!"

## LETTERS

An author as popular as Mark Twain naturally had an enormous correspondence. However, it was a great burden to him and often mail remained unopened for many days on his desk before he got around to it. Once when a fellow author wrote to him over a fairly important matter and failed to get an answer, he wrote again including a sheet of paper and a postage stamp as a gentle reminder.



## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

In a few days he received the following message from Mark Twain written on a post card:

"Paper and stamp received. Please send envelope."

The Reverend Henry Ward Beecher once sent the following note to a New York newspaper:

"I have just received this curious letter from Michigan and I give it to you *verbatim*:

'Owasso City, Mich.

March 28, 1870

April Fool.'

"I have heard of men who wrote letters and forgot to sign their names, but never of a man who signed his name and forgot to write the letter."

One day at the Knickerbocker Club in New York, a group of Mark Twain's friends recalled that it was his birthday, and decided to write him a collective letter. They composed seven or eight pages of nonsense and, since they did not know offhand where Mark was, addressed it:

*Mark Twain  
Lord Knows Where*

Several months elapsed when a postal addressed to them was received, bearing this message:

*He did. Mark Twain.*

The author of *Vanity Fair*, William Makepeace Thackeray, as a child, attended boarding school in England while his parents were

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

living in India. His school-life was pointedly described in the following letter that he sent to his mother:

"There are so many good boys to play with—there are 370 in the school. I wish there were 369."

A friend once wrote Mark Twain a letter stating that he was in very bad health, and concluding: "Is there anything worse than having toothache and earache at the same time?"

The humorist wrote back: "Yes, rheumatism and Saint Vitus' dance."

The famous friendship between Mrs. Patrick Campbell, the actress, and George Bernard Shaw has given rise to many choice bits of gossip. After the friendship had more than cooled, Mrs. Campbell decided to share her intimate correspondence with Shaw with the reading public, and asked his permission to publish his letters to her. His refusal was to the point:

"No, Stella, I will not play horse to your Lady Godiva."

Henry James, the American novelist, spent most of his life in England. At one time his house adjoined the property of a man who had become very wealthy in the manufacture of jam, but since his marriage to a peeress, had tried to forget his origin.

One day, the novelist received a note from his neighbor in which he complained in the most insolent way that James' servants were trespassing on his property. Henry James wrote back:

"Dear Sir: I'm very sorry indeed to hear that my servants are trespassing on your preserves.

"P.S. You'll excuse my mentioning preserves, won't you?"

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Mark Twain wrote to a friend inviting him to visit him. The friend replied that he was unable to do so and closed his note with the phrase "God be with you."

Later, Mark wrote back to him, "He didn't come. Next time, please send someone we can depend upon."

## LIFE

A person of a melancholy turn of mind was once speaking to Mark Twain on the brevity of human life.

"Why, do you realize, Mr. Clemens," he said, "that every time I draw a mortal breath an immortal soul passes on into eternity?"

"Ever try cloves?" asked Mark.

There are two tragedies in life. One is not to get your heart's desire. The other is to get it.

*George Bernard Shaw*

Sydney Smith, that amiable cleric, once neatly described his life thus:

"My life has been passed like a razor—in hot water or a scrape."

Believe everything you hear said of the world; nothing is too impossible bad.

*Balzac*

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

ON HIMSELF, ATTAINING THE AGE OF 33

*Through life's dull road, so dim and dirty,  
I have dragged to three and thirty.  
What have these years left to me?  
Nothing—except thirty-three.*

*Lord Byron*

## LOVE

Lord North, British Prime Minister, once pursued the actress Mrs. Rogers, showering her with all sorts of attentions. The young actress remained cool, however. Finally he affected a pose of despondency.

Meeting her backstage one day, he pulled a long face and asked, "Madam, what is the cure for love?"

She promptly replied, "Your Lordship is the best in the world."

Love in France is a comedy; in England a tragedy; in Italy an *opera seria*; and in Germany a melodrama.

*Marguerite Blessington*

## LYING

Lincoln was amused by the story of the California politician, who, after years of telling lies and half-truths, was caught in an

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embarrassing truth one day. But as usual he knew of a precedent.

"A Negro barber in Illinois," he recalled, "was known as one of the greatest liars the state had ever seen. As he sat in front of his shop one evening a crowd began to discuss the planet Jupiter.

"'Oh, Ah've seed dat stah befoh,' declared the barber. "'Twas down in Georgy.'

"Like your California friend," said Lincoln, "he told the truth, but thought he was lying."

Mark Twain could always win in a contest of tall stories. Here is one he told in the smoking-room of a steamer.

"There was a fire in the town of Hannibal one night, and Old Man Hankinson got caught in the fourth story of the burning house. It looked as if he was a goner. None of the ladders were long enough to reach him. The crowd stared at the doomed man with a helpless look in their eyes. Nobody could think of anything to do.

"Then all of a sudden, an idea occurred to me. 'Fetch a rope!' I yelled.

"Somebody brought a rope, and with great presence of mind I flung the end of it up to the old man. 'Tie the end around your waist,' I shouted. Old Man Hankinson did so, and I pulled him down."

Lord Mansfield and Doctor Johnson were talking of a mutual acquaintance who was given to telling stories which were more products of his imagination than of his observation.

"Suppose," remarked Lord Mansfield, indulgently, "we believe *half* of what he tells."

"Aye," assented Johnson, "but *which* half?"

George Washington, as a boy, was ignorant of the commonest accomplishments of youth. He could not even lie.

*Mark Twain*

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Mark Twain complained of the habit of so many storytellers who repeatedly interrupt themselves to ask if you have heard the story before. As an example, he told of an encounter with Henry Irving, the famous actor. Irving asked him if he had heard a certain story and Twain politely replied that he had not. Soon he asked him the same question, and then almost at the climax of the story, Irving again asked if he had heard it.

Twain replied, "I can lie once, I can lie twice for the sake of politeness, but there I draw the line. I not only heard the story, I invented it."

## MANNERS

George Bernard Shaw wired in reply to a luncheon invitation of Lady Randolph:

"Certainly not; what have I done to provoke such an attack on my well-known habits?"

Lady Randolph wired back:

"Know nothing of your habits; hope they are not as bad as your manners."

When he was at West Point, Whistler was once upbraided by his instructor for failing to remember the date of the battle of Buena Vista.

"Suppose," said the instructor, "you were out to dinner and the company began to talk of the Mexican War and you, as a West Point man, were asked the date of the battle—what would you do?"

"Do?" retorted Whistler. "Why, I should refuse to associate with people who could talk of such things at dinner!"

George Bernard Shaw once received an invitation from a celebrity-loving hostess:

"Lady X will be at home Tuesday between four and six."

The author sent back the card on which he had written:

"Mr. Bernard Shaw likewise."

Sir Robert Walpole said he always talked bawdy at his table, because in that all could join.

*Samuel Johnson*

## MARRIAGE

On his American tour, Oscar Wilde delivered the following verdict on Niagara Falls.

"Every American bride is taken there, and the sight of this gigantic waterfall must be the earliest, if not the keenest, disappointment in American married life."

Every woman should marry—and no man.

*Disraeli*

George Ade, the satirist, once said at the Chicago Athletic Club:

"I was sitting with a little girl of eight one afternoon. She looked up from her Hans Andersen and asked, 'Does m-i-r-a-g-e spell marriage, Mr. Ade?'"

"'Yes, my child,' I replied."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

One evening Talleyrand was playing whist when the conversation turned on a recent marriage of an elderly Duchess to her footman.

One of the ladies protested. "How could she!" she exclaimed. "A person of her birth to make such a match—marry a *valet-de-chambre*!"

"Ah well," said Talleyrand, "it was late in the game; at ten o'clock we don't reckon honors."

Doctor Johnson happened to be in the company of several people who were speaking of the misfortune of a certain man who was the possessor of a whining wife. Johnson claimed that they should save their pity.

"Depend upon it," said he, "he does not know that she whimpers. When a door has creaked for a fortnight, the master will scarcely give sixpence to get it oiled."

Men marry because they are tired, women because they are curious: both are disappointed.

*Oscar Wilde*

A bomb had exploded in the streets of Paris after Napoleon's carriage had passed but before the Empress's had arrived.

When Beau Brummell returned to London from Paris someone asked him what was going on in Paris.

"Oh nothing very much," he replied. "Just a little blow-up between Nap and his wife."

Theodore Hook, the writer and political humorist, was once told of the marriage of one of his political opponents.



"I am very glad indeed to hear it," he remarked and then, after a moment's thought, he added compassionately, "and yet I don't know why I should be. He never did me much harm."

A happy marriage was defined by Sydney Smith as resembling a pair of shears—"so joined that they cannot be separated; often moving in opposite directions, yet always punishing anyone who comes between them."

A man finds himself seven years older the day after his marriage.

*Bacon*

However much Doctor Johnson admired womankind and spoke of his wife with admiration, he always sided with the husband in hearing of any conjugal disputes.

"Women," he said, "give great offence by a contemptuous spirit of noncompliance on petty occasions. The man calls his wife to walk with him in the shade and she feels a strange desire just at that moment to sit in the sun; he offers to read her a play or sing her a song and she calls the children in to disturb them or advises him to seize that opportunity of settling the family accounts. Twenty such tricks will the faithfulest wife in the world not refuse to play, and then look astonished when the fellow fetches in a mistress."

It is said that once when his friends were joking with him about his never marrying, the composer Brahms laughingly said that once when he was on the point of matrimony he overheard the following conversation between two young wives.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"I hear," said one, "that your husband has given up smoking. Considering how much he used to smoke, it must have taken a strong will."

"Well," said the other, "that's the kind of a will I've got."

Socrates was asked whether a man was happier married or single.

"Which ever course he takes," was the melancholy reply, "he will repent it."

A man should be taller, older, heavier, uglier, and hoarser than his wife.

*E. W. Howe*

A physician, who was the unfortunate possessor of a very shrewish wife, once asked the eminent English Divine, Thomas Fuller, for a copy of some verses he had written on a scolding spouse.

"No need of the copy," answered the clergyman. "You possess the original."

Doctor Johnson always spoke with great respect and affection of his deceased wife, though he frequently spoke humorously of the little frailties that she shared with all womankind.

"My wife had a consuming reverence for cleanliness. Just as many ladies only sigh for the hour of sweeping their husbands out of the house as so much dirt and useless lumber, so she would say, 'A clean floor is so comfortable!'"

A Mormon acquaintance was once trying to impress Mark Twain with the virtues of polygamy. After presenting many reasons to justify the practice, the Mormon demanded that Twain cite any passage in the Bible that expressly forbade polygamy.

"That's easy," the writer replied, "'No man can serve two masters.'"

ON THE DEATH OF MILTON'S WIFE

*Milton in fretful wedlock tossed  
Found that his Paradise was Lost;  
But once more free and unrestrained,  
He found his Paradise Regained.*

Mark Twain's habit of swearing was a source of distress to his wife who repeatedly tried to cure him of it. One day, he cut himself while shaving and went through his entire repertoire with vehemence. His wife thereupon repeated every word he had said, hoping to shame him with the recital.

When she had finished, her unrepentant husband merely looked up and said, "You have the words, my dear, but you don't know the tune."

A gentleman complained to Doctor Johnson that the woman he wished to marry was of such superiority of mind and talents that it disturbed him and hindered him for asking for her hand.

"Sir," advised Johnson, "marry her. You need not be afraid. Before a year passes, you will find her Reason much weaker and her Wit not half so bright."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

The French playwright, Molière, was once asked why did he suppose that in some countries the king can assume the crown at 14 years of age, but not marry until he is 18.

"Because," replied Molière, "it is more difficult to rule a wife than a kingdom."

The daughter of the English statesman, William Wilberforce, was out campaigning for her father. When she arose once to speak, her father's supporters all began to shout, "Miss Wilberforce forever!"

"I thank you gentlemen," replied the young woman, "but I do not wish to remain Miss Wilberforce forever."

*There was a young lady of Malta  
When young was oft seen with the psalter,  
But she's read Marie Stopes,  
And now she just hopes,  
And prays to be led to the altar.*

The author of *Green Mansions*, W. H. Hudson, was once asked how long he had been married.

"As long as I can remember," he replied.

Someone mentioned to Doctor Johnson that he knew a man who had been most unhappy during his wife's lifetime because of her unpleasant disposition but had, upon her death, immediately married again.

"A triumph of hope over experience," was Johnson's remark.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Pope Pius IX was one day sitting for his portrait and was speaking to the artist of a monk who had broken his vows, fled the church, and married.

"Well," said His Holiness, summing up the matter, "he has taken his punishment into his own hands."

There have been many recipes for happy marriages and panaceas for unhappy ones. Doctor Johnson's is as follows:

"I believe that marriages would in general be as happy, and often more so, if they were all made by the Lord Chancellor upon a due consideration of characters and circumstances, without the parties involved having any choice in the matter."

## MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

Leopold Godowsky, the concert pianist, and Mischa Elman, the eminent violinist, attended together the American début of the youthful prodigy of the violin, Jascha Heifetz, who had just arrived from Europe. Heifetz' playing took the house by storm and the applause was terrific.

At the conclusion of the third number on the program, Elman turned to his companion and, loosening his collar, exclaimed:

"Isn't it hot in here!"

"Not for pianists!" retorted Godowsky.

The patience of Serge Koussevitsky, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, broke one day when he heard the same mistake made over and over again by a certain player. With a commanding gesture, Koussevitsky dismissed him from the orchestra.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"Nuts to you!" shouted the man as he left the stage.

"No! No!" cried Koussevitsky. "Eed ees du lade du apologize!"

Feminine admirers besieged the conductor Artur Nikisch with letters asking for locks of his hair—requests that he always granted with the greatest good humor.

"At this rate," a friend warned him, "you will soon be bald."

"Not I," replied Nikisch. "My dog will."

Charlie Chaplin was entertaining some friends at a Hollywood party, giving imitations of famous people. When he began to sing in a beautiful, clear, rich voice, one of the guests remarked, amazed, "Why Charlie, I didn't know that you could sing!"

"I can't," replied Charlie. "I'm just imitating Caruso."

At a Verdi festival of which Arturo Toscanini was scheduled to conduct several of the concerts, an envious rival was approached to take one of the other performances.

"I will," he agreed, "on one condition . . . if you will pay me one lira more than Toscanini receives."

His request was granted and after the concert this conductor received his check—for one lira!

Toscanini had conducted without charge in homage to Verdi.

During a rehearsal Leopold Damrosch was startled by hearing a loud horn note in the middle of a lyric passage for violins.

He stopped the orchestra and rebuked the horn player for the interruption.

"Ach, mein Gott!" exclaimed the player. "It was a fly and I played him!"

At one time Leopold Stokowski conducted a series of concerts in Paris. As time went on he became aware of a deeper and deeper expression of gloom on the concert-master's face, until finally, curious as to the cause of such profound melancholy, Stokowski began to question the man.

"Tell me, my friend," he said, "why are you so unhappy? Are you having domestic troubles, or do you feel unwell? Or perhaps you're in some financial difficulty?"

"No, no," growled the concert-master, "I detest music!"

The opera, *William Tell*, was being rehearsed at the Paris Opéra under the baton of its composer, Rossini. In one passage, Dacoste, a famous clarinetist of the period, repeatedly played an F sharp instead of F natural. The passage was gone over several times and the clarinetist kept making the same mistake. At the end of the rehearsal, Rossini met Dacoste in the theater corridors and spoke very affably to him of various things, but never mentioned the matter of the F sharp. Finally, Dacoste began to apologize for his error.

"No, no," protested Rossini, "it's quite all right. Go on playing F sharp. I'll put the F natural in somewhere else."

Hans von Bülow was once asked his opinion of a Berlin pianist's performance. At the concert, the pianist had forgotten the middle section of a composition and had been forced to improvise until he reached familiar territory. What, asked one of the audience, had Bülow thought of the improvisation.

"Well," said Bülow after some reflection, "it wasn't as bad as the part he *could* remember."

Amy Fay, the pupil of Liszt, tells many good stories of that great teacher and virtuoso. Once, she recalls, when she was playing a

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

certain passage where it was difficult to avoid making a rotary motion with the wrist, Liszt took her to task.

"Keep your hand still, mademoiselle," he commanded. "After all, you're not making an omelette!"

Many great musicians have been forced to take untalented pupils to augment their incomes. At one point in his career, Hans von Bülow, the conductor and pianist, became so impatient with inept aspirants that he posted the following notice on his studio door:

"No visitors admitted in the forenoon and not at home in the afternoon."

Although Anton Rubinstein is remembered more for his pyrotechnical piano-playing than for his compositions, he wrote many operas and symphonic works. Josef Hofmann tells that Rubinstein once promised the members of the orchestra all a good supper if the premiere of his new opera were a success.

At the performance, the composer was disgusted by the spiritless singing and the cold reception of his work. Convinced of his failure, he went home and went to bed.

Around one o'clock he was awakened by a loud rapping on his door and opening it discovered the hallway crowded with the men of the orchestra. He was indignant at being awakened.

"Why, master," said the spokesman, "you invited us to supper if the opera were a success; *we* liked it very much."

Leo Slezak, the great Wagnerian tenor, was once about to make his dramatic entrance as Lohengrin in the first act of that opera when the swan boat in which he was to seat himself started too soon.

As the swan glided majestically away, its boat unoccupied, Slezak



turned to the stagehands and asked, "Does anyone know when the next swan leaves?"

Once Hans von Bülow was rehearsing a large symphony orchestra when he suddenly stopped and said to the kettle-drummer, "Forte!" Whereupon the kettle-drummer played louder. Again the orchestra was stopped and Bülow shouted "Forte!" and louder sounded the drum.

When the conductor interrupted the orchestra and again commanded "Forte!" the exasperated drummer declared that he could not play any louder.

"I didn't ask you to!" replied Bülow. "You are playing *fortissimo*. The score calls only for *forte*."

Moritz Rosenthal was soloist with a well-known conductor. When the concerto was over the soloist and the conductor came out arm-in-arm to acknowledge the applause.

"Well," remarked a certain critic, "it's the only time they've been together the whole evening."

Rossini was present at the Opéra in Paris when one of his celebrated sextets was being sung. Since the tenor and soprano roles were being sung by two domineering stars, the other four singers modestly refrained from participating to any noticeable degree in the performance.

After a few minutes, the composer turned to a friend and said with pained surprise, "Evidently the four others are seconds. They ought to interfere and stop this awful duel!"

An Australian lady pianist had besieged Paderewski for an audition. Finally, to put an end to it, Paderewski agreed to listen to her.

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"I will play for you," said the lady, taking her place at the piano, "the *Erlking* as transcribed for the piano by Franz Liszt."

When the lady had finished her somewhat too decorous version of this music, Paderewski remarked, "More like a girl queen than an Erlking."

Moritz Rosenthal, the pianist, was present at a fashionable private house in Vienna when a rival pianist was asked to perform. He did so, and afterwards was asked by the hostess to autograph her fan as a memento of the evening.

"And perhaps you will write an appropriate sentiment too," said the hostess to the performer. "But I'm afraid it will have to be a short one as there is so little space."

"Why doesn't he, then," suggested Rosenthal, "write out his repertoire."

A friend was twitting Liszt about the way the ladies fought for his gloves, his cigar, his handkerchief, or anything that he left behind which could remotely be called a souvenir of the great artist.

"Well, after all," said Liszt, "it is the Dantes who create the Beatrices."

A well-known Viennese pianist had the courage to play the brief waltz of Chopin, known as the Minute Waltz, to Moritz Rosenthal and then the foolhardiness to ask him what he thought of the performance.

Rosenthal replied, "The most beautiful half-hour of my life."

A lady, after performing brilliantly on the harpsichord in the presence of Doctor Johnson, turned to him and asked if he were fond of music.

"No, madam," replied the doctor, "but of all noises, I think music the least disagreeable."

*There was a composer named Haydn,  
The field of Sonata would waydn;  
He wrote The Creation  
Which made a sensation,  
And this was the work that he daydn.*

A young composer gave Rossini a score of an opera and asked him to mark it with a cross wherever he found an error. After a few days, Rossini handed the score to the composer who leafed through it and found no crosses.

"Ah!" he cried overjoyed, "then there are no faults?"

Rossini sadly shook his head. "My friend, if I put a cross at every mistake that I found, it would not be an opera, it would be a cemetery."

Doctor Johnson was observed by a musical friend to be extremely inattentive at a concert while a celebrated soloist was performing an elaborate violin piece. His friend, to induce him to take greater notice of what was going on, explained to the doctor how extremely difficult it was.

"Difficult, do you call it, sir?" replied the doctor; "would to heaven it were impossible!"

When Wagner's *Lohengrin* was first performed in Paris, Rossini was asked his opinion of the work.

"One cannot judge a work upon a single hearing," replied the

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Italian composer, "and I have no intention of hearing this work a second time."

When Paderewski, early in his career, played at Windsor Castle before Queen Victoria, the Queen exclaimed at the end of his concert that he was a genius.

"Ah, Your Majesty," replied the pianist, "a genius perhaps. But before I was a genius, I was just a drudge."

Boswell was speaking about the power that certain musical compositions had to move him, and remarked to Doctor Johnson that the piece *Let Ambition Fire Thy Mind* so agitated him that he wanted to shed tears and then do deeds of great daring, such as rushing into battle.

"Sir," retorted Johnson, "I should never listen to it if it made me such a fool."

Someone was complaining to Rossini that the overture to his then recent opera *Le Comte Orey* was not up to his usual mark.

"Well, it's not my fault," replied the facile composer. "I was out fishing with Aguado, the banker. We were up to our knees in water and while I was composing it he talked continually to me about Spanish finances."

When Judith Gautier, the French author and poetess, was visiting Richard Wagner and his wife at Lucerne, she and Frau Wagner stepped out on the terrace one morning to find that the composer had climbed to the top of the highest tree in the garden.

"Do not look at him, I implore you," said Frau Wagner to her French visitor as they walked into the garden, "because if he is encouraged he commits no end of follies."

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Wagner was rehearsing *Götterdämmerung* at Bayreuth when a terrific thunderstorm burst over the town. Wagner heard the thunder but thought that it came from across the stage, so he hurried up onto the platform shouting, "There it is again! Who is responsible for that thunder sounding in the wrong place?"

One of the singers replied, "*That* thunder even you cannot stop, Meister."

Wagner's music is so loud that one can talk the whole time without people hearing what one says. That is a great advantage.

*Oscar Wilde*

Although in his later years he was somewhat of a dandy, Chopin was very negligent in his dress when he first arrived in Paris. Speaking of a musical soirée that took place early in 1831, he said:

"When they saw me at Mme. Schascheck's their astonishment knew no bounds at my looking such a proper fellow. I have let my whiskers grow only on my right cheek. They grow very well there and there is really no reason to leave them on my left since I always sit with my right toward the audience."

Chopin was once dining at the house of a well-known Parisian hostess. After the company removed to the *salon* the hostess requested Chopin to play a few compositions on the piano.

"But my dear madam!" exclaimed Chopin with pained surprise, "I have eaten so little!"

The pianist, Vladimir de Pachmann, was in the habit of making comments on his playing and on the composer during the concert,

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even interrupting the music to speak any thoughts that he considered the audience worthy to share. Once, his London concert had the good fortune to be reviewed by the then young music critic, George Bernard Shaw.

"De Pachmann gave his well-known pantomimic performance," G. B. S. wrote, "with accompaniments by Chopin—a composer whose music I would listen to M. de Pachmann playing forever, if the works were first carefully removed from the pianoforte."

*Another composer named Brahms,  
Caused in music the greatest of quahms,  
His themes so complex  
Every critic would vex,  
From symphonies clear up to psahms.*

Once early in Handel's sojourn in England he was hired to accompany a singer at a concert. The concert was a fiasco and the singer attempted to blame Handel for the failure.

"The next time that you accompany me," said the singer, "if you do not do better, I'll jump over the stupid harpsichord and smash it to bits."

"Let me know beforehand so that I can advertise it," replied Handel. "I am sure more people will come to see you jump than will ever come to hear you sing."

Handel, in common with many other 18th century composers, often plagiarized from the works of others. When a friend censured him for the obvious theft of a melody, he replied:

"That pig did not know what to do with such a good tune, and it was too bad to waste it."

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Handel's *Messiah* was once performed in Dublin under the composer's direction. The first violinist, following the fashion of the day, had at one place in the score a *cadenza ad libitum* in which he could display all his powers of invention and manual dexterity. In this instance, the violinist took full advantage of the opportunity, and the cadenza went on and on through the remotest keys. The other musicians began to appear restless and Handel leaned on the music stand and commenced to yawn. Finally, however, the violinist reached the trill which heralded the close of his solo and Handel was heard to remark:

"Velcome home, Mr. Dubourg, velcome home!"

At a rehearsal, an oboe player was receiving instructions from Sir Thomas Beecham on how to play a certain passage.

"Oh any fool can see that!" remarked the oboist, agreeably.

"I'll have to take your word for it, sir," replied Sir Thomas.

At the age of five, Mozart was busily composing music, although his childish handwriting left much to be desired. One day his father looked over his shoulder at a score covered with notes and blots.

"My," said the elder Mozart indulgently, "what a difficult composition."

"Why shouldn't it be difficult," replied the young Mozart; "it's a concerto."

A young composer of more ambition than talent once asked Mozart for advice on how to proceed with his career.

"First write simple things," replied Mozart, "songs, for example."

"But *you* composed symphonies when you were only a child."

"Ah," said Mozart, "but then I didn't ask advice from anyone on how to become a composer."

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Sir Thomas Beecham was speaking of British Music.

"It is in a state of perpetual promise," said he. "It might even be said to be a long promissory note."

Hans von Bülow was always irritated by the super-abundance of applause and the inconsiderate demands for encores after a concert.

On one occasion he became so vexed by the continuous applause that he came to the edge of the stage and said in a sharp tone, "If you do not stop this ridiculous applause, I will play all of Bach's 48 Preludes and Fugues from beginning to end without interruption."

It worked. The audience knew that he could carry out his threat.

During the Versailles Conference after the First World War the world-famous pianist Paderewski attended in his new capacity as Premier of Poland. One day on the terrace of the palace he met Georges Clemenceau, Premier of France. Clemenceau greeted Paderewski with the following words:

"Paderewski, the greatest pianist in the world! Paderewski, the Premier of Poland! *Mon Dieu*, what a come-down!"

Hans Richter, the well-known conductor, was once rehearsing *Tristan and Isolde* in London at the Covent Garden Opera House. Evidently the orchestra was not playing in a suitably impassioned manner for the conductor stopped the players, rapping on his stand in irritation.

"Stop . . . stop," he cried, "you play this like married men!"

A friend once visited Liszt at his home in Weimar. When it was time to leave, the kindly composer offered to accompany his friend



to the station, and they set off although the skies looked threatening. Halfway to their destination, the heavens opened up and a veritable downpour descended. Liszt continued to talk about a new composition he was working on. Finally the friend said, "You do not seem to mind the weather."

"No," said Liszt, "I never take notice of that which takes no notice of me."

Some years ago, Walter Damrosch conducted a concert in which sixteen pianists participated. After considerable coming and going on the stage, the conductor turned and whispered to the first row of the audience:

"What they need here is a traffic-cop, not a conductor."

When Richter was conducting a rehearsal in Vienna of Bruckner's Sixth Symphony, the composer happened to be sitting in the back of the hall, enraptured to hear his rarely played work. Suddenly the conductor came to a place in the manuscript score that was difficult to decipher but where the orchestra was working up to an impassioned climax.

Richter paused, turned to the composer and called out, "F or F sharp in that chord?"

Bruckner leaped to his feet, his face shining with excitement and pleasure, and cried, "Anything you like, Herr Kapellmeister, anything you like! But go on! Go on!"

The composer Brahms was a great devotee of culinary art, not from the creative but from the consuming standpoint. At one time his doctor ordered him on a reduced diet, and Brahms promised faithfully to follow his orders.

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The very next day the doctor saw Brahms in a famous Viennese restaurant in deep communion with a very rich and very Viennese meal.

"So this is the way you obey my orders," said the doctor reproachfully.

Brahms looked up from the table. "Oh don't bother about it! Do you suppose I'm going to starve to death just to be able to live a few more years?"

An American journalist was staying in a Milanese hotel back in the eighties when one morning he was awakened by the sound of piano-playing. At breakfast he inquired of the *maitre d'hotel* if they allowed piano-playing at seven in the morning.

"Not as a rule," replied the *maitre*, "but we make an exception in the case of Signor Verdi."

Since the Devil is reputed to be a great musical performer, it seems to be traditional that all great virtuosos be compared to his Infernal Highness at one time or another.

Once when Paderewski had surpassed himself in brilliance, he was approached after the concert by a woman who had evidently been overcome by the performance. "I know who you are," she exclaimed. "You are the Devil!"

"And you," retorted Paderewski, "are an angel for saying so!"

Charles Gounod, the composer of *Faust*, once gave a hearing to an aspiring young tenor and pronounced the following verdict:

"Your voice is not well placed, your tones are faulty, and you make efforts that are in poor taste; besides, you are uncertain as to pitch."

The young man thought a moment and then replied, "Yes, but other than that, what do you really think?"

Enrico Caruso, the famous tenor, told this experience, which would seem to prove that no man is as well known as he thinks he is.

"While motoring in upper New York State, my automobile broke down and I sought refuge in a lonely farmhouse while the car was being repaired. The farmer and I got into conversation and after a while he asked my name. I told him it was Caruso.

"The farmer jumped to his feet and exclaimed, grabbing my hand, 'I never thought that I would ever see a man like you here in my kitchen! Caruso! The great traveler! Robinson Caruso!'"

At his club, Douglas Jerrold was talking with a group of members in the smoking-room when one of the company remarked on how much he liked a certain song.

"That melody always carries me away when I hear it," he added with a soulful expression.

Jerrold turned to the others.

"Can *nobody* whistle it?" he anxiously inquired.

At one of his lectures on Wagner, Walter Damrosch reminisced a bit:

"When I look at your young, shining, girlish faces, I recognize many who attended my first Wagner lecture, fifty years ago."

At one of Jenny Lind's many performances for charitable causes, in this case for the Consumption Hospital in London, Douglas William Jerrold thanked the Swedish Nightingale for her splendid performance.

At the conclusion of his little speech, the British writer suggested that the part of the hospital which would be completed with the

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funds taken in at this performance should be called "The Nightingale's Wing."

Once the composer Stravinsky asked a doctor's advice on insomnia. The doctor, after examining him, suggested various remedies.

"And above all," he added, "you must rest—especially mentally. Don't do any brain work."

"But I'm a composer!" protested Stravinsky.

"Oh, *that's* all right," replied the doctor. "I'll permit you to compose."

The German composer and pianist, Moritz Moszkowski, once gave the following recipe for opening oysters:

"Place a plate of oysters on the piano and play a score of Max Reger. The oysters will soon yawn."

*There was a composer named Liszt,  
Who from writing could never desiszt.  
He made polonaises  
Quite worthy of praises,  
And now that he's gone, he is miszt.*

Saint-Saens once received a score from a young composer with a rather intimately couched dedicatory letter enclosed, beginning, "Dear colleague, I hope you will find some new and beautiful things in my composition"—and other high-flown remarks.

The composer of *Samson and Delilah* did not feel overwhelmed

by the honor. He sent back the score with a note saying, "What is new is not beautiful and what is beautiful is not new."

Once in Mexico City, Jacques Thibaud, the violinist, and Pablo Casals, the 'cellist, found that they were by chance staying at the same hotel. There followed a succession of telephone calls one to the other.

"Hello—is this Thibaud? I just wanted to tell you that you are the world's worst violinist."

"Hello—is this Pablo Casals? As a 'cellist you are a good carpenter. What noises you can make!"

And so on and on.

Finally, the telephone rang again.

"Is this Jacques Thibaud?"

"Yes."

"This is the French Minister and I wanted to say that——"

Thibaud interrupted. "Go to hell! I've heard all that before. You can just go back to your hole and I trust that your mother will bark at you!"

Then he found out that it really was the French Minister who was calling.

As almost everyone knows, the eminent physicist and formulator of the theory of relativity, Albert Einstein, takes great pleasure in playing the violin. One evening at an intimate gathering Einstein was playing for the company when he noticed the well-known comic dramatist, Ferenc Molnar, was laughing. He stopped playing.

"Why do you laugh when I play?" he asked. "Do I ever laugh at your plays?"

A very modern composer once telephoned the pianist Leopold Godowsky.

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"Please come to my concert," said the composer. "I especially want you to hear my last composition."

"Your very last composition?" queried Godowsky.

"Yes."

"If that's a promise, I'll be there."

While touring America, Pol Plançon, the French basso, was given a suite in a hotel in a large Western city. Upon arriving, he went upstairs and almost immediately reappeared in the hotel lobby looking very puzzled. The manager asked him if everything was all right.

"Oh yes," replied the singer, "but you might remove the dead man who is occupying my bed."

"Dear me," said the manager, "I gave orders for him to be removed yesterday. I can't imagine why it's been overlooked."

Adolph Henselt, the composer and pianist, had many pupils in St. Petersburg. One day a friend ascended the stairs to his apartment and heard the most frightful cacophony issuing from the composer's rooms. Henselt came out on the landing to speak to him, and as the door was opened the friend noticed that there were three or four young women within, all playing different pieces on different pianos. When he asked Henselt the reason for this, Henselt replied with the following splendid logic:

"Oh, they learn to pay attention to what they're doing . . . and they get rid of any silly ideas they may have about their *art*."

Carl Maria von Weber was conducting a rehearsal of his sacred composition, the *Jubel Cantata* in London. The chorus attacked the work in a loud and lusty manner. The composer threw up his hands in despair.

"Stop! Stop!" he exclaimed. "Would you bawl in that manner in the presence of God?"

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The famous 18th century soprano, Gabriella, was once summoned to sing before Catherine the Great of Russia. After her arrival in St. Petersburg she was asked by the Empress her fee for entertaining the Court with a few songs. The soprano replied that it was five thousand ducats.

"Five thousand ducats!" exclaimed the Empress. "Why not one of my field-m Marshals is paid so much!"

"Then your Majesty had better get one of your field-m Marshals to sing for the company," was the singer's reply.

Fritz Kreisler was once giving a concert before the Sultan of Turkey. The Sultan loudly applauded at the conclusion of a selection and then, when Kreisler continued, applauded louder than ever. Kreisler, flattered by such a cordial reception, outdid himself in violin pyrotechnics when a court official jumped up and grasped the violinist by the arm.

"Don't you hear his Majesty clapping his hands?"

"Of course. What of it?"

"What of it!" was the shocked reply. "Why, the Sultan is giving you the signal to stop!"

A lady staying at a Berlin hotel was greatly annoyed by the persistent piano-playing in a neighboring room. Finally she wrote a note begging the person to stop the racket. In a few minutes she received a card on which was written:

"Very sorry to have annoyed you. Your request is granted. Anton Rubinstein."

When the pianist Josef Hofmann was nine years old he played before the German Emperor, sharing the program with another pianist.

When the concert was over, the Master of Ceremonies approached

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Hofmann's father and handed him an envelope containing two hundred marks. Since the elder Hofmann had noticed that the other artist had received four hundred marks he politely asked the Master of Ceremonies why his son was not also rewarded in like measure.

"It's Court custom," replied the Master of Ceremonies. "Children under ten—half price."

Rachmaninoff, when he was seven, was playing Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata* at the home of a Russian count.

When the young performer came to the third of several long pauses in the piece, an old lady, the count's mother, patted him on the shoulder and said:

"Never mind, dear. Just play us something you know."

General Ulysses S. Grant summed up his musical education and tastes in a terse fashion.

"I know two tunes," he said. "One is *Yankee Doodle* and the other isn't."

Oscar Hammerstein spent a fortune launching the Manhattan Opera House in competition with the Metropolitan Opera House. Shortly after the opening, someone asked him, "Well, is there any money in it?"

"Of course," replied Hammerstein; "*My* money is in it."

When Maury Paul, who later became Cholly Knickerbocker, first started work as a society editor, he was sent to cover the opening



of the Metropolitan Opera. Since he did not know the box-holders by sight, he merely copied down the names from the brass plates on the doors to the boxes, unaware that they were the names of the original box-holders.

The following day he was called into the office of Frank Munsey, his employer.

"Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish has just called up to say," remarked Mr. Munsey, "that beside being at the opening of the Metropolitan Opera, you must have also attended the opening of half the graves in Woodlawn Cemetery."

A young English pianist, who had just graduated from the Royal College of Music, one day played several compositions for the famed Australian soprano, Nellie Melba, who was in London at the time singing at Covent Garden.

After he had finished, he turned to Madame Melba and anxiously awaited her criticism.

"My dear young man," she remarked, "I can see you have talent. You also have presence and charm. What you need now is a good scandal."

One day when Hans Richter was conducting at a concert, a man in the front row of the audience persisted in tapping his foot. The conductor endured this for some little time and then turned to the audience and fixed the offender with a steely eye.

"I am sorry to trouble you," said Richter icily, "but I cannot always keep time with your foot."

As a boy, George M. Cohan deemed the violin lessons he was forced to take as the worst punishment that could be inflicted on

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anyone. Years later, after his great success, he took his father to an expensive restaurant where a violinist was regaling the diners with an elaborate solo.

"See, George," said his father jokingly, "if you had paid attention to your lessons, you might be playing here now."

"So I might," replied George, "but then you wouldn't be eating here and listening to me."

Mark Twain was the guest of honor at an opera box party given by a member of New York society. The hostess had been particularly talkative all through the performance—to Mark's increasing irritation.

Toward the end of the opera, she turned to him and gushed, "Oh, my dear Mr. Clemens, I do so want you to be with us next Friday evening, as I'm sure you will enjoy it—the opera will be 'Tosca.'"

"Charmed, I'm sure," replied Twain. "I've never heard you in that."

The actor, Samuel Foote, was once a member of a troupe the whole company of which was nearly driven out of their wits by a stagehand's singing of a certain song. All day long this man would be humming, singing, or whistling, but always the same melody which he would only get half-way through, break down, and then begin again.

Finally, Foote decided to get to the root of the matter and asked the man why, *why* he always had to sing that song.

"Because it haunts me," replied the man.

"No wonder!" exclaimed Foote. "You are always murdering it!"

The house that Beethoven lived in while in Vienna preserves among many mementos none more touching than the little piano at which he composed so many great works.

Some years ago a young American girl visited the house and idly began to play on the famous piano.

"I suppose," she said to the custodian, "that you have many visitors here."

"Yes, a great many," was the reply.

"Many famous people, no doubt."

"Yes, Paderewski came here recently."

"I suppose he played something on this piano," said the girl, her fingers still on the keys.

"No," replied the man, "he did not consider himself worthy."

The composer and piano virtuoso, Anton Rubinstein, was a great admirer of the fair sex. When he visited England he was presented after a concert to the beautiful Princess of Wales, later Queen Alexandra. In a very ardent manner, the pianist proceeded to kiss the Princess's hand when she said rather hastily that it was not the custom in England to kiss the royal hand.

Whereupon, Rubinstein lifted his eyes to the Princess and with great feeling replied, "With us, Madame, it is the law."

George II of England was a king who genuinely loved music. He toiled valiantly to become a good performer on the violin but it seems his toil was in vain. He hired a good, but candid, teacher, Johann Peter Salamon, who, after a particularly bad royal lesson, broke the news gently to his royal pupil.

"Your Majesty, musicians may be divided into three classes—those who play well; those who play badly; and those who cannot play at all. You, Sire, have now reached the second class."

The eminent English composer, Sir Edward Elgar, told of a prophetic incident that occurred when as a child he first showed up at boarding school. An upperclassman asked him his name.

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"Edward Elgar," replied the boy.

"Say *sir!*" was the pugnacious reply.

"*Sir* Edward Elgar."

A newspaper man was interviewing Offenbach, the facile composer of so many comic operas and so much popular music of the time.

"You were born at Bonn, were you not?" inquired the reporter.

"Oh, no," Offenbach replied. "*I* was born at Cologne; poor Beethoven was born at Bonn."

Rufus Choate once remarked before a concert to his daughter, "Now explain these numbers to me that I may not dilate with the wrong emotion."

Cardinal Newman, at the age of 82, used to amuse himself now and then by playing the violin.

"Of course," he remarked, "I play out of tune, but all the women declare it is beautiful."

## NAMES

General Wolfe, the conqueror of Quebec, overheard a soldier speaking in very familiar terms of his general. "Wolfe and I drank a bottle together once. Wolfe should do this and Wolfe should do that."

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The General confronted the soldier and remarked, "I think that you might do me the honor of calling me *General Wolfe*."

"No," replied the soldier with great presence of mind. "Did you ever hear anyone speak of General Achilles or General Julius Caesar?"

As an example of play on words this incident is hard to equal. The poet, Thomas Moore, was dining with two friends named, respectively, Strange and Wright. As they were sitting around the table after dinner, Moore suddenly observed:

"There is one knave among us, and that's Strange."

"There's one Moore," said Wright quickly.

"Ah" said Strange, "that's Wright."

At a friend's house, Charles Lamb was introduced to a certain Miss Pate, and he immediately broke into verse:

*"Miss Pate*

*I hate."*

"Well, you are the first person who ever told me so, however; and on such short acquaintance, too," remarked Miss Pate with some asperity.

"Oh, I mean nothing personal about it," Lamb airily explained. "If your name had been Miss Dove, I should have said:

*Miss Dove*

*I love.*

Or:

*Miss Pike*

*I like."*

Napoleon had a habit of not listening to people that he met at receptions, so that often he would ask their names over and over again within a very few minutes.

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Once at a reception at the Tuileries, he asked the composer Grétry his name five or six times. Toward the close of the evening, as the Emperor was preparing to leave the room he seemed to look intently at Grétry as though wondering who he was. Grétry stepped forward.

"My name is still Grétry, Sire," he said.

Napoleon never asked it again.

A friend once asked the great French dramatist, Edmond Rostand, to register the birth of a newly-arrived son. When Rostand appeared at the registry office, the clerk asked him his name.

"Edmond Rostand," was the reply.

"Vocation?"

"Man of letters and Member of the French Academy."

"Very well, sir," said the clerk. "You must sign your name here. If you cannot write, please make a cross."

## OBESITY

George Bernard Shaw, hardly a physical heavyweight, was once the butt of a few jokes by the bulky G. K. Chesterton.

"Why, to look at you," laughed G. K., "one would think there was a famine in England."

"And to look at you," retorted Shaw, "one would think that you were the cause of it."

President Taft, wearing one of the largest bathing suits ever manufactured, plunged into the waters of Beverly Bay. Shortly

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afterward, one neighbor said to another, "Shall we go into the water?"

"Perhaps we'd better wait," suggested the other. "The President is using the ocean now."

*They say that ex-president Taft  
When hit by a golf-ball once laughed  
And said, "I'm not sore,  
But although you cried 'Fore'  
The place where you hit me was aft."*

President Taft, even in his younger days, was a man of considerable girth. Once, when he was a law reporter, working on a case out of town, in Somerville, Ohio, he found that he couldn't get back to the office that night unless he stopped a through express. He wired to headquarters, "Stop the express for a large party." When the express stopped that night, the young law reporter got on with his brief case and the conductor looked up and down the platform and then turned to him and inquired, "Where is the large party I was to take on?"

"I'm it," was the reply; "that's all."

## ORATORY

During the darkest days of World War II when the very existence of Britain was threatened, Prime Minister Winston Churchill was preparing one of his stirring speeches which he was to deliver in

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Parliament. After working over it with great care, he forwarded it to the Foreign Office for comment.

The following day the manuscript was returned to him unmarked except for the notation that he had ended one of his sentences with a preposition. The preposition had been neatly circled, and an arrow indicated its proper place in the sentence.

The Prime Minister immediately dispatched the following note to the Foreign Office:

"This is the type of arrant pedantry up with I will not put."

During President Coolidge's term of office, a group of Amherst graduates, resident in Europe, asked him, as their most distinguished classmate, to send a cable message collect to be read at their class reunion in Madrid.

So during the reunion a banquet was held at which the master of ceremonies rose to announce that a cable had been received from the President of the United States. The applause was deafening, the guests pushed back their chairs and turned to the speaker's table expectantly. The Master of Ceremonies unfolded the cablegram and read the message:

"Greetings. Calvin Coolidge."

A gentleman who considered himself a great orator once approached John Randolph, the Virginia statesman, to ask his opinion on a speech he had just made.

"And what have you to remark, sir, about my oratory?"

"Nothing, sir," was the succinct reply, "it is not remarkable."

The chairman of a club committee once approached Oliver Wendell Holmes, the elder, on the subject of his giving a lecture to the club. When the chairman started to sound him out on the matter of fees, Holmes remarked:



## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"My fee if I select the subject is \$150.00; if the Committee selects it, the charge is \$250.00; but in either case the speech is the same."

Mark Twain was so often called upon to make impromptu speeches whenever he was invited out to dinner that he finally made it a stipulation of his acceptance that he would not be asked to speak.

Once, however, at a large but informal gathering, Mark rose from his chair near the end of dinner, the talk stopped and the other guests looked up expectantly and greeted him with loud applause.

"Waiter," said Mark when all was quiet, "please bring me some bread."

Noise proves nothing. Often a hen who has merely laid an egg cackles as if she laid an asteroid.

*Mark Twain*

At a banquet in London, Sir Charles Russell, Lord Chief Justice of England, informed Sir Henry Irving, the actor, that he was to propose Sir Henry's health, but was completely at a loss as to what to say.

"Well," replied Irving, "I shouldn't think a man who had made such an eloquent address before the Parnell commission would ever be at a loss for words!"

"But," protested Sir Charles, "*then* I had something to say!"

Following the American Revolution, Benjamin Franklin attended a dinner at which were present the British and French ministers. Toasts were drunk. The British minister exclaimed: "To England—

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

the Sun, whose beams enlighten and fructify the remotest corners of the earth."

Thereupon the French minister arose and toasted, "France—the Moon, whose mild, steady, cheering rays delight all nations and penetrate the darkness."

Last, Ben Franklin stood up and gave as his toast:

"George Washington, the Joshua who commanded the sun and the moon to stand still, and they obeyed him."

After Gladstone had completed a long speech in which he attacked the policies of Prime Minister Disraeli, Disraeli finished him off with this remark:

"My right honorable opponent is inebriated by the exuberance of his own verbosity."

After Mark Twain made a trip to the Hawaiian Islands in 1866, his friends persuaded him to give a lecture recounting his experiences. In order to encourage him, since it was his first lecture, they promised to place cohorts at strategic places in the audience who would laugh at the proper time.

When Twain appeared on the platform his knees were knocking so violently together that his friends were afraid that he wouldn't last long enough to need their services. But their services were unnecessary for another reason. His opening: "Julius Caesar is dead, Shakespeare is dead, Napoleon is dead, Abraham Lincoln is dead, and I am far from well myself," made it difficult for him to proceed with the rest of his talk.

Chauncey Depew, the renowned after-dinner speaker, once played a trick on Mark Twain when they were both scheduled to speak at a banquet. Twain spoke first and was received with great enthusiasm.

When Depew's turn came, he stood up and said, "Mr. Toast-

master, Ladies and Gentlemen, before this dinner, Mark Twain and I agreed to trade speeches. He has just delivered mine and I'm grateful for the way you have received it. However, I regret to say that I've lost his speech and can't remember a thing he had to say."

He sat down amid much applause.

## PLAGIARISM

At a rehearsal of a new work by Max Reger, the composer himself was conducting. The horn-player found a certain passage difficult and repeatedly stumbled over it. Finally, Reger lost his patience and stopped and asked for an explanation.

"Herr Hofkapellmeister," retorted the irritated horn-player, "this passage never sounded well—even in *Tristan*."

One of Whistler's wittiest remarks at a party prompted Oscar Wilde to exclaim:

"Good Heavens! I wish I had said that!"

"Never mind, dear Oscar," retorted Whistler. "You will."

Nicholas Murray Butler and Professor Brander Matthews of Columbia University were discussing what constitutes plagiarism.

"In the case of the first to use an anecdote," said Prof. Matthews, "it is originality; in the case of the second, it is plagiarism; third, lack of originality; fourth, it is drawing from a common stock."

"Yes," replied Nicholas Murray Butler, "and in the case of the fifth, it is research."

## POLITICS AND POLITICIANS

President Calvin Coolidge once saw the famous non-conforming Senator Borah riding a horse.

"Must bother the Senator," remarked the President, "to be going in the same direction as the horse."

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was being presented as the Democratic candidate for the Presidency to a large audience in Denver, in 1932. The presiding officer could not resist referring to his fellow politicians on the platform in the most laudatory terms, referring to them as likely timber for the Cabinet, the Senate, and the foreign service.

When Roosevelt arose to speak, he commenced thus:

"Mr. Chairman, members of the cabinet, distinguished representatives of the nation in the Senate of the United States, and plenipotentiaries extraordinary in foreign lands!"

When Lincoln was told that a member of his cabinet might be a probable competitor for the Presidency, he was reminded of the following story:

"My brother and I were once plowing on an Illinois farm. I was driving the horse and he was holding the plow. The horse was lazy, but on one occasion he rushed across the field so that I with my long legs could scarcely keep up with him.

"On reaching the end of the furrow, I found an enormous chin-fly fastened on him and knocked it off. My brother asked me what I did that for. I told him I didn't want the old horse bitten in that way.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

" 'Why,' said my brother, 'that's all that made him go!'

"Now, if my would-be opponent has a Presidential chin-fly biting him, I'm not going to knock it off, if it will only make his department go!"

Before he gained the assurance and confidence that comes with practice and experience, Al Smith, shortly after he was elected governor of New York for the first time, visited Sing Sing. He was taken on a tour of the buildings by the warden and finally was asked to make a brief speech to the inmates.

He gladly agreed, but seemed not too sure of himself as he started to speak. He made matters a little bit worse by starting off with, "My fellow citizens." He remembered then that prison inmates are not citizens.

He tried to correct himself hurriedly but went too far to the other extreme. "My fellow convicts," he stammered as he restarted.

When he realized what he had said, he gave up by saying, "Well, anyhow, I'm glad to see so many of you here."

### ON EDMUND BURKE

*Oft have I heard that ne'er on Irish ground  
A poisonous reptile ever yet was found;  
Nature, though slow, will yet complete her work,  
She saved her venom to create a Burke.*

*Warren Hastings*

Nicholas Longworth, speaker of the House of Representatives, was not endowed with much hair. One day he entered a barbershop with ex-President Taft.

"Hair-cut?" asked the barber of Mr. Longworth.

"Yes," he replied.

"Oh no, Nick," said Taft from the next chair. "You want a shine."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

In the House of Representatives, the then Speaker of the House, Thomas Brackett Reed, was once forced to send telegrams to absent members asking their attendance in order to obtain a quorum.

One congressman, delayed by a flood that had disrupted railway service, telegraphed back:

"Washout on line. Can't come."

Reed telegraphed:

"Buy another shirt; come on next train."

Once when Theodore Roosevelt was making a campaign speech, a slightly tipsy heckler kept interrupting him by shouting, "I am a Democrat."

Finally, Roosevelt turned to the heckler and asked, "Just why is the gentleman a Democrat?"

"Because my grandfather was a Democrat and my father was a Democrat, so I'm a Democrat," was the reply.

"My friend," said Roosevelt, "suppose your grandfather had been a jackass, and your father had been a jackass, what would you be?"

"A Republican!" was the instant reply.

As a young man in Illinois, Lincoln was among those who attended a "mend-your-ways-or-you'll-go-to-hell" sermon which was preached by Peter Cartwright. At one point in the sermon, Cartwright asked those who desired to go to heaven to arise. Everyone but Lincoln scrambled to his feet. When all were seated again the preacher called upon those ready to go to hell to identify themselves by standing. All chairs remained occupied.

"I am surprised," said Cartwright, "to see Abe Lincoln sitting back there unmoved by these appeals. If Mr. Lincoln does not want to go to heaven and yet wants to escape hell, perhaps he will tell us where he does want to go?"

Lincoln pushed himself up from his chair and said, "I am going to Congress."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

In the Massachusetts Senate, two Senators once got into an argument and finally one told the other to "go to hell." The recipient of this compliment was so incensed that he complained to the Governor of the Commonwealth, who at that time was Calvin Coolidge.

In reply to the man's question as to what he was going to do about it, Governor Coolidge said, "Well, Senator, I've looked up the law and you don't have to go there."

Just before the American Stamp Act was passed, Lord John Ligonier the British soldier recommended the building of stronger defences around Annapolis. He presented his plans to the Duke of Newcastle, then British Foreign Minister.

"To be sure Annapolis ought to be protected," Newcastle exclaimed with great vehemence; "of course Annapolis must be protected and *will* be protected!" Then he added, "Bye-the-bye, where is Annapolis?"

Theodore Roosevelt—a combination of St. Paul and St. Vitus.

*John Morley*

The United States Senate has been the scene of a good many famous verbal battles. Many years ago, Judah P. Benjamin launched into a ferocious attack on William H. Seward, excoriating him personally and all his projects and policies. This volley of extreme abuse lasted for some time, and then Benjamin retired to his seat, exhausted by his efforts but still angry. When he had sat down, he looked defiantly in Seward's direction, awaiting his reply.

Senator Seward walked casually over to Benjamin, looked at him humorously, and said in his most genial, suave manner:

"Benjamin, give me a cigar. And when your speech has been printed, you might send me two copies."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

To people who kept criticizing his administration, President Lincoln once told the following story:

"A traveler on the frontier found himself, as night came on, in a wild region. A terrible thunderstorm added to his trouble. He floundered along until his horse gave out and then had to get out to lead him. Occasional flashes of lightning afforded the only clue to the path, and the crashes of thunder were frightful. One bolt, which seemed to crush the earth beneath him, made him stagger and brought him to his knees. Being by no means a praying man, his petition was short and to the point: 'Oh Lord! If it's all the same to you, give us a little more light and a little less noise!'"

Woodrow Wilson summed up a certain breed of politicians:

"Only two things move political bosses—fire and fodder. Fodder in front of their noses, fire underneath them."

A great throng gathered in Bloomington, Illinois, to hear Lincoln and Douglas debate when they were rival candidates for the United States Senate.

Mr. Douglas opened the debate and spoke with great force and conviction. All during his talk Mr. Lincoln sat huddled up on an old kitchen chair, the picture of despair. His friends thought it would be impossible for him to meet the strong argument put forth by his opponent.

When it came time for him to speak, Lincoln arose gradually, and then spoke very deliberately.

"When I was a boy," he began, "I lived in Sangamon County on the Sangamon River. There plied at that time on that river an old steamboat, the boiler of which was so small that when they blew the whistle, the paddle wheel wouldn't go 'round. When the paddle wheel went around, they couldn't blow the whistle.

"My friend Douglas reminds me of that old steamboat for it is evident from what he has told us this afternoon that when he talks he can't think, and when he thinks he can't talk."



## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

At the Riggs Bank, in Washington, D.C., where Henry Clay was attempting to negotiate a loan on his personal note, he found the officers exceedingly polite, but adamant in their refusal to grant a note.

"Your credit is perfectly good," he was assured, "but it is the inflexible rule of this bank to require an indorser."

As soon as he found Daniel Webster, Henry Clay asked him if he would indorse the note.

"With pleasure," said Webster. "But I need some money myself. Why not make your note for \$500, double your original amount, and you and I will split it?"

The bargain was struck, the loan was negotiated, and the note is still in the Riggs Bank—unpaid.

A visitor wondered aloud if Lincoln didn't find the ceremonies of the Presidency irksome at times.

Lincoln admitted that upon occasions he did find them annoying.

"I often feel like the man who was ridden out of town on a rail," he said, "This fellow declared that if it wasn't for the honor of the thing he'd just as soon walk."

Eamon De Valera, the Irish political leader, was once arrested for a political speech that he made at Ennis. After serving a year's sentence he immediately returned to Ennis and started to speak again with the words:

"As I was saying when I was interrupted——"

Calvin Coolidge never suffered from any inflated ego because he was President of the United States.

Falling asleep in the middle of a presidential executive day, he awoke from his nap, grinned, and asked a friend, "Is the country still here?"

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

President Lincoln was once driving in an open carriage with a great landholder when they passed an old colored man who bowed low and doffed his hat to them. Lincoln smiled in acknowledgment and tipped his hat in return.

"Why," asked the landholder, "should *you*, of all people, tip your hat to a slave?"

"Because," replied Lincoln, "I prefer not to be outdone in courtesy by anyone."

Benjamin Disraeli and William Ewart Gladstone were long the heads of the two leading political parties in England. Both were great men, but there was never any doubt which was the greater wit.

Once, someone asked Disraeli to define the difference between a misfortune and a calamity. The reply, delivered with the utmost suavity, was typical of the man.

"Well, if Gladstone fell into the Thames, it would be a misfortune. But if anybody dragged him out, ah! *that* would be a calamity!"

Lord Brougham, the member of Parliament in the early years of the nineteenth century, was considered by his fellow parliamentarians as a none too amiable or trustworthy character.

One day, he rode by in his carriage, the door of which was decorated with a large "B" surmounted by a coronet.

Sydney Smith was standing at the curb talking to a friend when he called his friend's attention to the passing carriage.

"There," he remarked, "goes a carriage with a bee on the outside and a wasp within."

The British Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, was criticizing the editor of a London newspaper for not giving him sufficient support. The editor of the paper claimed that he always supported Melbourne's party when he thought it was in the right.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"We don't *want* support when we are in the right," retorted Melbourne; "what we want is a little support when we are in the wrong."

A fashionable Washington hostess once made a wager that she could make President Coolidge talk. Cornering him at a dinner party, she tried to make good her bet.

"Oh Mr. President," she said, "I have made a bet that I can make you say at least three words."

"You lose," replied the President.

Speaking during a Presidential campaign, Thomas Brackett Reed, then Speaker of the House, ran into a persistent heckler in one town. The Democrat kept on asking questions, to which Reed answered courteously, even though it was the obvious intention of the Democrat to make him lose his temper.

But it was the heckler who broke first. Realizing that he was matched against a stronger will than his, he finally shouted, "Aw, go to hell!"

"Thank you," replied Reed, with a profound bow. "This is the first time that any Democrat has had the decency to invite me to Democratic headquarters."

Simon Cameron, Secretary of the War Department in Lincoln's cabinet, was once accused of profiteering in army materiel. President Lincoln was discussing the scandal with Thaddeus Stevens.

"Do you really think that Cameron would steal?" the President asked Stevens.

"Well," replied Stevens, "he wouldn't steal a red hot stove!"

This remark reached Cameron's ears and Cameron demanded that Stevens retract the statement to the President.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"Mr. President," wrote Stevens, "I was wrong when I said that Secretary Cameron wouldn't steal a red hot stove. What I should have said was—that he *would* steal one."

Daniel Webster struck me much like a steam engine in trousers.

*Sydney Smith*

While Lincoln was President, he was once stricken with a mild case of smallpox. While in bed, he remarked to one of the attendants:

"Send up the office-seekers, and tell them that I have something I can give each one of them."

Richard Brinsley Sheridan once succeeded admirably in trapping a noisy member of the House of Commons who interrupted every speaker with cries of, "Hear, hear!" He alluded to a well-known political character whom he represented as a person who wished to play the rogue, but had only sense enough to play the fool.

"Where," exclaimed Sheridan with great emphasis, "where shall we find a more foolish knave or more knavish fool than this?"

"Hear, hear!" was instantly bellowed from the accustomed bench.

"Thank you very much," said Sheridan with a bow as he took his seat amid peals of laughter.

During a reception, where the guests were marshaled past the President by watchful ushers, John Bach McMaster, the historian, noticed that no one was allowed to come too close to Mr. Lincoln. Mr. McMaster, who at the time was only a boy, also noticed one old gentleman, who did not try to conceal his disappointment at

not having shaken hands with the President. He was determined to have more than a look at Lincoln so he waved his hat and shouted, "Mr. President, I'm from up in York State where we believe that God Almighty and Abraham Lincoln are going to save this country."

Lincoln smiled and, nodding his head slightly, responded, "My friend, you are half right."

Early in his political life, Disraeli stood for a certain Middlesex borough for the Conservative interest. He was canvassing personally and solicited the vote of a well-to-do farmer of doubtful political convictions.

"Vote for you!" cried the farmer. "Why, I'd vote for the devil sooner!"

"Quite so," retorted Disraeli, imperturbably. "But in the event of your friend not running, may I hope for your vote?"

Richard Brinsley Sheridan's son, Tom, planned to follow in the footsteps of his father and enter parliament. Discussing party politics and political expedience with his father one day, Tom said that if elected he would put a label on his forehead reading "To Let" and side with the party that made the best offer.

"Good, Tom," said his father, "but don't forget to add the word *unfurnished*."

Mme. Louise Ségur was the daughter of France's Minister of the Interior, Casimir-Périer. M. Périer had at one time tried to form a party of moderate Republicans, with very little success.

One day, Mme. Ségur was sitting in the gallery of the Chamber of Deputies when she saw her father enter the room alone.

"Ah," she remarked, "here comes my father with his party."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

A reporter, interviewing Robert Ingersoll, asked:

"Would you mind telling me how much your library cost you, Mr. Ingersoll?"

Mr. Ingersoll, looking over the shelves of infidel books for which he was famous, replied:

"My boy, these books cost me the governorship of Illinois and possibly the Presidency of the United States!"

In an effort to keep at least one political campaign clean, a member of the political party opposed to Chauncey Depew's suggested, "What do you say? Shall we carry on this campaign without any mud-slinging?"

"That is a splendid idea," replied Depew with the warmth of sincerity, "I'll tell you what I'll do. If you will refrain from telling any lies about the Republican party, I will promise not to tell the truth about the Democratic party."

Captain Robert Falcon Scott appealed to Lloyd George to help him obtain financial backing for his last expedition to the South Pole. Lloyd George, who was unable to give him official support as Chancellor, suggested that he see a certain rich landowner who was interested in polar research. Scott took this advice and reported back later to Lloyd George.

"Were you successful?" asked the Chancellor.

"He has given me a thousand," was the reply, "and he has promised to raise £50,000 if I can persuade you to come with me, and a million more if I manage to leave you there."

Disraeli listened with his usual air of nonchalance to Gladstone's eloquent, scathing and prolonged denunciations of the Conservative party, of which Disraeli was the head.

"When we contemplate the extraordinary duplicity, the amaz-

ing perfidy, the unabashed hypocrisy—"Gladstone thundered, then paused that his words might have full effect.

Disraeli leaned forward and said, as if with kindly helpfulness, "The last word was hypocrisy."

Douglas Jerrold once defined party government as an hour-glass.

"When one side's run out," he said, "we just turn on the other and go on as before."

As a result of a quarrel in the Senate at Washington, John Randolph and Henry Clay refused to speak to each other for several weeks. It wasn't until they met on a narrow sidewalk on Pennsylvania Avenue that words were forced out of them.

Neither one would step aside for the other at first until Randolph, looking his opponent straight in the eye, declared:

"I never step aside for scoundrels!"

"I always do," promptly replied Clay as he stepped out into the muddy street and let Randolph have the sidewalk.

Someone was saying that a certain man behaved in a very peculiar fashion. Doctor Johnson, always the staunch Tory, excused the man's behavior thus:

"Is he not a citizen of London, a native of North America, and a Whig? Let him be absurd, I beg of you. When a monkey is *too* like a man, it shocks one."

One night at a reception for President Grover Cleveland, one of the guests, Frank H. Brooks, shook hands with the guest of honor.

"Mr. Cleveland," remarked Mr. Brooks, "I am very glad to

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

thank you personally for the only political honor I've ever received."

"What was that?"

"You appointed me Consul in Trieste."

"Ah, indeed. How did you like Trieste?"

"I didn't go there. You afterwards changed the appointment to Consul General to St. Petersburg, the salary of the Trieste appointment not being such as I could accept."

"Well, and how did you like St. Petersburg?"

"I didn't go there either. Family reasons finally compelled me to decline the appointment."

"Shake hands again," exclaimed Cleveland. "I have never before, to my knowledge, had the distinguished honor of shaking hands with a Democrat who refused two offices."

## PRAISE

A Washington newspaper correspondent told President Theodore Roosevelt that Senator Robert M. La Follette, Sr., who was then an enthusiastic admirer of the President, had said that "T. R." was the "greatest man in the world."

At this, Roosevelt bared his teeth and replied, "Well, I have nothing to add to that!"

King James I of England was visiting in the Northern Counties when, upon passing through a small town, he was greeted by a deputation of the town fathers. They proceeded to unroll a parchment and their spokesman started to read a long and elaborate address to His Majesty. In the most high-flown terms they prayed that the King might live as long as the sun, the moon, and the stars.



"Faith, man," interrupted the King, "and if I do, my son must reign by candle-light."

A French gentleman met Thomas Jefferson at one of the ministries in Paris soon after Jefferson had been appointed Minister to France.

"I am delighted to meet you, sir," said the gentleman. "You replace Dr. Franklin, do you not?"

"I succeed Dr. Franklin," was the reply. "No one can replace him."

Two young ladies, who professed great admiration for Doctor Johnson's works, paid a call on him at his house in Gough Square one day. As the servant ushered them into his study, they stood on the threshold as the Doctor looked up from his writing-table, and the elder of the young ladies launched into a speech of some length and elaboration that she had previously prepared and memorized for the occasion. When she had finished this enthusiastic effusion, she paused expectantly, waiting for one of those famous Johnsonian sentences.

"Fiddle-de-dee, my dear young ladies," replied Johnson.

Voltaire was speaking to a friend of the Swiss physiologist Haller in very complimentary terms. His companion remarked that Haller had spoken of *him* in terms that were most derogatory.

"Ah, well," said Voltaire indulgently, "probably we are both mistaken."

When Frederick William IV, King of Prussia, was making one of his periodic tours of the kingdom, he arrived at a small country town where a delegation of town officials were awaiting him ceremoniously at the gate.

"O most excellent majesty, most high and mighty prince!" be-

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

gan the burgomeister, pompously. "When Hannibal stood before the gates of Carthage——"

"He was probably just as hungry as I am!" interrupted the King, proceeding into the town.

Voltaire was asked what he thought of a certain nobleman who had just died.

Voltaire replied:

"He was a sturdy patriot, a talented writer, a loyal friend, a good father and husband—provided he is really dead."

## PRIDE

President Lincoln received a deputation of government officials who had come to obtain absolute control over certain funds to be disbursed by them. The President knew what they wanted and told them the following story:

"You are very much like a man in Illinois whose cabin was burned down, and, according to the kindly custom of early days in the West, his neighbors all contributed something to start him again. In his case they had been so liberal that he soon found himself better off than before the fire, and got proud. One day a neighbor brought him a bag of oats, but the fellow refused it with scorn, and said, 'I am not taking oats now; I take nothing but money.'"

Mrs. Horace Greeley was a very independent if somewhat eccentric woman. At one time she bought three goats for the children to

play with, and all this livestock was installed in the Greeley's New York house.

Once a friend called on Sunday morning and found the family preparing for church. Mr. and Mrs. Greeley, the children and the goats were all milling around in the front hall.

"The question is," said Mr. Greeley to the friend, "whether the goats shall go up Broadway with us. Mrs. Greeley insists that I shan't go to church unless at the head of a procession of children and goats. It seems like a secular following."

However, several days later, Mr. Greeley said to the friend, "Well, we got off at last without the goats, though Mrs. Greeley said to me, 'It's only your miserable pride!'"

Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts called at the White House early one morning. He found President Lincoln polishing his boots. Somewhat amazed, the Senator said:

"Why, Mr. President, do you black your own boots?"

With a vigorous rub of the brush, the President replied, "Whose boots did you think I blacked?"

## PUNCTUALITY

The English writer, Charles Lamb, was for many years employed as a clerk in India House, an occupation that was by no means congenial to him. His utter disregard for punctuality was noticed by his superior.

"I have remarked before," the superior said, "that you come very late to this office."

"Yes, sir," admitted Lamb, "but you must remember that I go away early."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

When an American official at the Paris Exposition of 1900 sent a letter to Whistler making an appointment for "exactly four-thirty" to discuss the hanging of his work at the Exposition, Whistler wrote back:

"I congratulate you. Personally, I have never been able and never shall be able to be anywhere at precisely four-thirty."

## PUNS

A certain gentleman of Louis XVI's court, the Marquis de Bièvre, was famed for being a great punster. Once the King thought that he had cornered him, when, at an audience, the King walked directly to the Marquis and said:

"I hear you can make a pun on any subject, M. de Bièvre. Make one on me."

"Your Majesty is no subject," replied the Marquis promptly.

The cynical Dean, Jonathan Swift, frequently displayed a cold-blooded streak in his brand of humor.

Once, seeing a carpenter falling through a scaffold, he remarked, "that he always liked to see a mechanic go through his work with dispatch."

A friend swung in with John Godfrey Saxe's pace as he strode rapidly up Broadway and asked the poet where he was going in such a hurry.

"To Boston this afternoon, *Deo volente*," replied Saxe.

"What route is that?" asked the friend.

"By way of Providence, of course," said the poet, increasing his pace.

George II of England, who was also King of Hanover, went to visit the latter place and stayed away for two years, leaving the royal family in England. Some wits wrote the following notice and posted it up at the gates of St. James palace:

"Lost, or strayed, out of this house, a man who has left his wife and six children on the parish. A reward is offered of four shillings, six pence. Nobody thinks him worth a crown."

## RELATIVES

That amiable clergyman, Sydney Smith, once had a house-full of cousins visiting him. When someone inquired as to their relationship to him, he replied:

"They are all first cousins and I wish them—once removed."

One would expect that a man like Whistler, who could quarrel so violently with all his friends, would hardly be all sweetness and light to his relatives. And he wasn't. Particularly, did he single out his brother-in-law, Sir F. Seymour Haden, as the object of his acrimony, and their quarrels were regular and intense. Someone once remonstrated with Whistler and said that a discreet apology would make everything all right.

"Don't be silly," sniffed Whistler. "A brother-in-law is not a connection calling for sentiment."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Oscar Wilde was speaking of a particularly stupid fellow to a peer, and added, "By the way, he claims to be distantly related to you."

The noble lord glared at Wilde: "Why, the man's a downright fool!" he exclaimed.

"That may be the merest coincidence," retorted Wilde.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the playwright, was seriously angry with his son, Tom, for marrying against his wishes. The first time they met the father informed the son that he had made his will and cut him off with a shilling.

Tom said he was, indeed, very sorry, and immediately added, "You don't happen to have the shilling about you now, sir, do you?"

Douglas Jerrold and a friend were discussing a mutual acquaintance.

"Do you call *him* a kind man?" demanded the friend. "A man who stays away from his family and never sends them a farthing! Do you call that kindness?"

"Certainly," Jerrold replied, "unremitting kindness."

During the courtship of Doctor Johnson and Mrs. Porter, the doctor once told her that he was of mean extraction, that he had no money, and that he had had an uncle hanged.

Mrs. Porter, to prove that they had a lot in common, replied that she had no more money than he had, and that, while she had not had a relation hanged, she had fifty who *deserved* hanging.

## ROYALTY

When Louis XIII, King of France, was on his deathbed, he ordered that his young son be brought to him. When the child arrived, the dying father asked:

"What's your name?"

"Louis XIV," was the reply.

"Not yet," snapped the King.

Charles II of England, though hardly a brilliant ruler and certainly not a moral one, was popular with his subjects. The same could not be said about his brother and successor, James II, who was finally chased from the throne.

Once, while Charles was still king, he expressed a wish to make an excursion through London unattended. His brother, then Duke of York, exclaimed that it would not be safe for the monarch to wander around without protection.

"Depend upon it, brother," retorted Charles, "no one will kill me to make *you* king!"

### CHARLES II OF ENGLAND

*Here lies our sovereign lord the King,  
Whose word no man relies on;  
He never says a foolish thing,  
Nor ever does a wise one.*

*The Earl of Rochester:*

Written as an inscription for the King's bedroom door

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Edmund Burke was making one of his famous attacks in Parliament on the Civil List when he was repeatedly interrupted by a member who was also an official in the Royal Household. This individual kept insisting that Burke remember his duty to the King. Finally Burke lost all patience.

"I perfectly understand my duty to honor His Majesty," he remarked, "but I do not thereby feel constrained to honor his manservant, his maidservant, his ox,"—and fixing his eyes on the interrupter, "—or his ass."

The diplomat chosen by King Henry VIII of England to take a message to Francis I of France at a very precarious diplomatic juncture begged to be excused, saying, "Such a threatening message to so intemperate a prince as Francis I might cost me my life."

"Fear not," said the king. "If the French king should have you killed, I will lop off the heads of a dozen Frenchmen now in my power."

"But of all these heads," protested the nobleman, "there may not be one to fit my shoulders."

*King Henry the Eighth to six spouses was wedded:  
One died, one survived, two divorced, two beheaded.*

When King George V was Prince of Wales, he was once conducting drill on the deck of a battleship where he held the rank of lieutenant. As he was somewhat new at his task, he gave the orders with some slowness. At one point he had his men marching toward the unguarded edge of the deck and, either through nervousness or forgetfulness, could not seem to give the proper command.

Finally, his superior officer roared, "God Almighty, Sir, can't you at least say Good-bye to your men!"



## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

At a reception one evening at the Tuileries, the Emperor Napoleon spied a young woman wearing a parure of magnificent diamonds. He immediately strode over to her and demanded:

"Are those stones genuine, Madame?"

"Mon Dieu, Sire," replied the lady with a bow, "how should I know? In any event, they're good enough to wear here."

The court astrologer to Louis XI of France predicted the day exactly on which the king's mistress died. The superstitious monarch somehow connected the death of his beloved with the magician and resolved to punish the latter for it. Sending for the man, intending to have him murdered, the king asked him one more question.

"Tell me when you are to die."

"Three days before Your Majesty," was the reply.

The king changed his mind about doing away with his astrologer and, in fact, carefully guarded the astrologer's life.

## SCIENCE

The wife of the famous physicist, Robert A. Millikan, was once passing through the hall of her home just in time to hear the maid answer the telephone.

"Yes," she said, "this is Dr. Millikan's residence, but he's not the kind of doctor who does anybody any good."

Several years before Luther Burbank won renown for his hybrids, an acquaintance who lacked confidence in Burbank's ability, asked him in a tired voice:

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"Well, what are you working on now?"

"I'm trying to cross an eggplant with a milkweed," replied Burbank.

"And what in the name of heaven do you expect from that?" demanded the man.

"Why, custard pie, of course," said Burbank calmly.

When Charles Darwin was visiting the country house of a friend, the two boys of the family thought they would play a joke on the scientist. They caught a butterfly, a grasshopper, and a centipede, and glued various parts of the insects' bodies together, making a strange composite creature.

"We caught this insect in the field," they said to the scientist. "Can you tell us what it is, Mr. Darwin?"

Darwin looked at the bug and smiled slightly. "Did you notice whether it hummed when you caught it, boys?" he asked.

"Yes," they answered, nudging one another.

"Then," said Darwin, "it is a hum-bug."

## SCOTCH

Harry Lauder was out playing golf one very cold day. When he came off the course he turned to his caddy saying:

"Here's something for a hot whisky, laddie."

He pressed something into the boy's hand which turned out to be a lump of sugar.

Doctor Johnson's animosity for all things Scottish is well-known. Once when he was berating the land in the presence of a Scotsman

and concluded by remarking "that it was indeed a vile land," the Scotsman rushed to the defence of his country.

"Whatever you say, sir," he said, "you must remember that God made it as He did all lands."

"Certainly He did," retorted Johnson, "but we must always remember that He made it for Scotchmen, and, though comparisons are odious, God also made Hell."

Once when a group of people in Dr. Johnson's company were indulging in that always popular pastime of sighing for the "good old days," a member of the group remarked that there was no doubt about it, "poor old England was lost."

"Sir," replied Johnson, "it is not so much to be lamented that poor old England is lost, as that the Scotch have found it."

Andrew Carnegie once overheard two gamekeepers discussing the weather on his Scottish estate.

"Hoot! Sandy, a n't ye cauld wi' the kilt?"

"Na na, mon, but I'm kilt wi' the cauld!"

## SELF-MADE MEN

A fervent admirer of Disraeli was speaking of him to the English statesman, John Bright, who did not share the admiration.

"Well, there is one thing you must admit," said the admirer, "Disraeli is a self-made man!"

"Yes," replied Bright, "and he adores his maker."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

A pompous, inflated Congressman once remarked to Horace Greeley: "I am a self-made man."

To which Greeley replied, "Well, sir, that relieves the Almighty of a great responsibility."

## STATURE

At a gathering in a London club, Lord Roberts, the great British soldier, was being introduced by a friend to a group of people. One of those present was an extraordinarily tall man who when introduced to Lord Roberts bent down patronizingly and said, "I have often heard of you, but"—shading his eyes with one hand as though the famous general, of small stature, could be seen only with difficulty—"I have never seen you."

To this witticism, Lord Roberts promptly answered: "I have often seen you, sir, but I have never heard of you."

A group of men were discussing Stephen Douglas when one of them mentioned his small stature. One of the others, not an admirer of Douglas, said that the length of a man's legs was often an indication of his intellectual capacity. When Lincoln joined the group, the argument had reached the usual stalemate.

Lincoln was finally asked, to settle the question, just how long a man's legs should be.

"Well," he replied, "I think a man's legs ought to be long enough to reach from his body to the ground."

At an evening party, Doctor Samuel Johnson, remarkable for his bulk, and Doctor Oliver Goldsmith, remarkable for his diminutive

tiveness, sat in a corner discussing some matter heatedly, finally settling down to a protracted dispute. An onlooker turned to the others and remarked:

*"Ursa Major and Ursa Minor are having a fine time of it!"*

## TACT

Although Madame De Stael was considered one of the most brilliant women of her time, physically she was not attractive. On one occasion at one of her salons she noticed that all her male guests, except one, had deserted her when a celebrated beauty made her appearance.

Turning to the man near her she said, "Monsieur Talleyrand, I want you to answer me honestly. Were you, the beauty, and I in a small boat and it overturned in a storm, which would you save, the beauty or me?"

After a moment's thought, Talleyrand replied with a bow, "Ah, Madame, you swim so well . . ."

The French writer, Bernard Fontenelle, when over 90 years of age, was out walking one day when Madame Helvétius, wife of the philosopher, emerged from a nearby shop. She greeted him, but the aged writer went on his way without noticing her.

A week or so later they met again at a friend's house. Madame Helvétius reproved Fontenelle for passing her by.

"Just think," she said, affecting great sternness, "you passed without even looking at me."

"Madame," replied Fontenelle, "if I had looked at you I never should have passed."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

When Queen Elizabeth visited Lord Bacon at his house in Hertford soon after she had created him Chancellor of England, she remarked that "this house is too small for a man like you."

"Madam, it is your Majesty's fault," replied Bacon with a bow; "for you have made me too large for the house."

Lincoln was always bothered by hordes of people who were free to offer advice of the most unconstructive kind. Everyone seemed to have the only solution for bringing the war between the states to an end and was impatient when the President didn't take the advice.

Once a deputation of congressmen visited the President with a piece of advice even more preposterous than usual. As was often the case, the incident reminded the President of a story.

A fellow entered a darkened theater and put his new stove-pipe hat on the next seat. A very fat lady crowds in front of him and sits down on the hat.

"Madam," said the man, rising and bowing, "I could have told you that my hat wouldn't fit you before you tried it on."

A lady asked Richard Brinsley Sheridan to accompany her on a walk but he begged to be excused because of the inclement weather. Returning from her walk, the lady met him promenading in a leisurely fashion.

"So, Mr. Sheridan!" she exclaimed indignantly. "It seems that the weather has cleared up!"

"Just a little, m'am," retorted the dramatist; "enough for one, but not enough for two."

The late dictator of Greece, General Metaxas, was once invited to try out a new flying-boat. He decided to pilot it himself and

did so masterfully until the commander, his host, noticed that they were about to make a landing at an airport.

"Excuse me, Excellency, but it would be more suitable to come down on the sea as this is a hydroplane."

"But of course," laughed the General, "what am I thinking of!"

The General thereupon made a perfect landing on the water and turning to his host he remarked, "I must compliment you on the tact with which you drew my attention to the incredible blunder that I nearly made."

Upon saying which, His Excellency opened the door and stepped out into the sea.

When Voltaire arrived in England in 1727 the French were very unpopular so that it was dangerous for him to walk out. However, he skillfully extricated himself by his quick wit, for one day he was followed by an angry mob shouting, "Kill him! Kill the Frenchman!"

Voltaire turned and faced the rabble.

"What! You want to kill me because I am a Frenchman? But have I not been punished enough in not being an Englishman?"

Once, at a diplomatic dinner, Mrs. William Howard Taft, the wife of the President, sat next to a French diplomat. The conversation turned on politeness.

"After all," the gentleman said, "we French excel in politeness. Everyone acknowledges it. You Americans are a remarkable people but we are more polite. You admit it?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Taft, "that is our politeness."

## TAXES

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was frequently a guest aboard the "Nourmahal," the yacht belonging to Vincent Astor. Once he was invited to take a cruise in the wintertime.

"Well, I hope you aren't putting that big thing in commission just for me," he protested.

"The Nourmahal is in commission all year round, Mr. President," replied its owner.

"Well, in that case," retorted the President, "I guess we'll have to raise the taxes on the rich again."

Theodore Hook, the English poet, was entertaining some friends by improvising comic songs, when his servant entered the room.

"Excuse me, sir, but Mr. Winter, the tax-collector, is here to collect payment."

Hook imperturbably continued at the piano as if nothing had happened and sang the following verses:

*"Here comes Mr. Winter, collector of taxes.*

*I advise you to pay him whatever he axes:*

*Excuses won't do; he stands no sort of flummery.*

*Though Winter his name is, his presence is summary."*

Lady Carteret, wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, once said to Dean Swift: "I find that the air of Ireland is most excellent for one's health."

"For God's sake," exclaimed Swift, "do not say so in England or they will certainly tax it."



The famous New England naturalist and author of *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau, was once imprisoned for non-payment of taxes. While in jail, Ralph Waldo Emerson paid a call on him. When he was ushered into the miscreant's cell, Emerson exclaimed: "Well, in Heaven's name, what are you doing in jail!" "What are you doing out of it!" retorted Thoreau.

ON COLBERT, FINANCE MINISTER TO LOUIS XIV

*Here lies the father of taxation:  
May Heaven, his faults forgiving,  
Grant him repose; which he, while living,  
Would never grant the nation.*

## WEALTH

A tacit rebuke is hidden in Mark Twain's remark to a man who was envying the good fortune of Andrew Carnegie.

"But after all," said the man in a superior tone, "like all these great fortunes, Carnegie's money is tainted."

"Yes," agreed Mark, "'taint yours, and 'taint mine."

In the days when Mark Twain was a struggling young newspaper writer in San Francisco, a lady with whom he was acquainted saw him with a cigar-box under his arm looking in a shop-window.

"Mr. Clemens," she said reproachfully, "I always see you carrying that cigar-box around with you. I'm afraid that you are smoking too much."

"It isn't that," said Mark. "I'm moving again."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Baron Rothschild was traveling with a friend down the Rhine. On board the boat there were several boys who identified the famous financier, and one of them remarked that a souvenir of the Baron might be worth quite a lot of money.

"Just think," he said, "if I could only get that silk handkerchief out of the Baron's pocket . . . how much it might be worth!"

"Try and get it then," urged his friend.

The lad edged up near to the Baron and started to tug at a corner of the handkerchief, when the Baron's friend noticed the lad and whispered to the Baron, "Baron, there's a boy trying to steal your handkerchief!"

"Let him alone," murmured the Baron; "we all have to start with small things!"

It is the wretchedness of being rich that you have to live with rich people.

*Logan Pearsall Smith*

When Governor of Massachusetts, Calvin Coolidge was solicited to make a deposit in a certain Boston bank. Evidently the bank received a deposit for, one day, when walking by the bank with a friend, a terrific noise issued from the building and the friend said, "What in heaven's name do you suppose that is?"

"Oh, that?" drawled Coolidge. "That's that deposit of mine drawing interest."

A "soak-the-rich" socialist managed to gain an audience with Baron Rothschild, the banker, and expounded his views on how the wealth of the world should be distributed.

"It isn't fair," he declared, "for one man to have millions and millions of dollars, while his neighbor may have nothing at all."

Rothschild motioned to his secretary and asked him to get the figures on his total wealth. While the secretary was doing this the banker consulted an almanac to find out how many people there were in the world.

When the figures had been compared and a few calculations made, Rothschild again spoke to the secretary.

"Give this man three cents," he said, "that is his share of my wealth."

## WOMEN

One day the late W. C. Fields and a friend were conversing on that never-failing source of conjecture—Woman.

"Well, tell me," asked the friend, "do you believe in clubs for women?"

"Yes," was the reply, "if every other form of persuasion fails."

As Mrs. Gladstone passed down the stairs from the gallery of the House of Commons, Disraeli cast a glance at his political opponent's wife and remarked:

"There goes a woman without one redeeming fault."

The 18th century writer and eccentric, Lady Mary Wortley Montague, once handed this bouquet to the fair sex: "There is only one reason why I am glad that I am a woman: I shall never have to marry one."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

There was a discussion in progress as to the kind of woman that made the best wife. Some upheld the pretty woman, others the housewife, while others claimed that the brilliant, intellectual wife was the one that would wear the best. Doctor Johnson did not agree with the latter.

"Supposing," said he, "a wife to be of a studious or argumentative turn, it would be very troublesome. For instance . . . if a woman should continually dwell on the subject of the Arian heresy."

TO W. SHAKESPEARE

*You wrote a line too much, my sage,  
Of seers the first, and first of sayers;  
For only half the world's a stage,  
And only all the women players.*

*James Kenneth Stephen*

One of Cambridge's most eminent gentlemen and the founder of the Thayer Laboratory, Dr. Henry Thayer, was walking one slippery winter's day along Brattle Street, when he slid on the ice and collided with a lady pedestrian. Both fell in a heap onto the sidewalk together. The Doctor, paralyzed with mortification and apologies, could scarcely make a move to rise, but the woman was equal to the situation.

"Doctor," she said politely, "if you will be kind enough to rise and pick out your legs, I will take what remains."

A gentleman was once sitting in a box at the theater with Lord North, British Prime Minister, and turned to his lordship and asked:

"Who is that ugly woman that just came in?"

"Oh that," replied Lord North, "that is my wife."

"Sir, ten thousand pardons," stammered the man. "I did not mean her ladyship I meant the monster with her."

"That—is my daughter."

ON IDA PFEIFFER, THE LADY TRAVELER

*Through regions by wild men and cannibals haunted,  
Old Dame Ida Pfeiffer goes lone and undaunted;  
But, bless you, the risk's not as great as 'tis reckoned,  
She's too plain for the first, and too tough for the second.*

*James Hannay*

Doctor Johnson was present in a gathering where two ladies had just been introduced and who immediately began comparing notes on the ugliest man they knew. One mentioned Doctor Oliver Goldsmith and the other heartily concurred in her choice. Dr. Johnson, overhearing their conversation from the sidelines, turned to the general company.

"Thus the ancients," he remarked, "on the commencement of their friendships, used to sacrifice a beast betwixt them."

Oliver Wendell Holmes somehow got mixed up in a typical ladies' social function. The hostess really had worked very hard to get him to attend and made the most of the occasion. She paraded the cream of her acquaintances and encouraged the others to lionize him.

As the gathering broke up, the hostess shook Doctor Holmes's hand and asked, "Well, doctor, what do you think of afternoon tea?"

"I'll give you my impression in four words," he said, "Giggle-gabble-gobble-git."

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Mrs. Horace Greeley was deeply opposed to the killing of animals to provide articles of clothing. Once when she met Margaret Fuller, the author, who was wearing a fine pair of kid gloves, she touched the latter's hand and exclaimed with horror, "Skin of a beast! Skin of a beast!"

"Why, what do you wear?" inquired the astonished Miss Fuller.

"Why, silk of course!" was the reply.

"Silk!" cried Miss Fuller. And then with disgust she added, "Entrails of a worm! Entrails of a worm!"

Talleyrand was speaking of a certain well-known Parisian lady.

"She is abominable!" he exclaimed. Then after a moment's pause, he added sweetly, "But then it is her only fault."

### ALEXANDER POPE TO THE DUCHESS OF QUEENSBERRY

*Did Celia's person and her sense agree,  
What mortal could behold her and be free?  
But Nature has, in pity to mankind,  
Enriched the image, but defaced the mind.*

### THE DUCHESS' ANSWER TO THE ABOVE

*Had Pope a person equal to his mind,  
How fatal it would be to womankind;  
But Nature, who does all things well ordain,  
Deformed the body, but enriched the brain.*

At a reception, a newly-rich woman buttonholed Beau Brummell, and in the course of the conversation insincerely remarked that she was surprised that anyone as fashionable as he would permit himself to be seen talking with such an outsider. Such false humility received a proper answer.

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

"My dear lady," Brummell retorted airily, "pray do not be concerned. The room is large and there is no one very near us."

If Cleopatra's nose had been shorter, the face of the whole world would have been changed.

*Pascal*

The great English poet, John Milton, was once asked if he would teach his daughters several foreign languages.

"No, sir," he replied bitterly, "one tongue is sufficient for any woman!"

On one of his practically non-stop transcontinental lecture tours, Mark Twain after a very heavy day was about to fall asleep, exhausted, in his Pullman berth. Just as sleep was about to engulf his consciousness, he was startled by the querulous voice of an old lady intoning over and over, "Oh, I am so thirsty. Oh, I am so thirsty." This was repeated with maddening regularity and persistence.

Unable to stand it any longer after tossing and turning for a while, Mark got up and groped down the car in his nightclothes and brought the old lady a glass of water. The old lady duly thanked him and Mark returned to his berth, looking forward to curling up in a deep sleep the minute his head hit the pillow.

His expectation was about to be fulfilled when, all of a sudden, he sat bolt upright and with horror heard the too familiar voice intoning:

"Oh, I *was* so thirsty. Oh, I *was* so thirsty."

Some friends were remarking in the presence of Doctor Johnson that a certain woman of their acquaintance was indeed rather in-

## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

insipid but that she was possessed of a certain softness of manner that was not disagreeable.

"She has some softness, certainly," remarked Doctor Johnson, "but then so has a pillow."

A woman's club is reported to have sent the following letter to the late Charles William Eliot when he was president of Harvard:

"Dear Sir: Our club committee, having heard that you are the country's greatest thinker, would be greatly obliged if you would send us your seven greatest thoughts."

Men *say* of women what pleases them; women *do* with men what pleases them.

*De Ségur*

The witty actress and writer, Miss Ilka Chase, was at one time married to the actor, Louis Calhern. The marriage was not of long duration and after their divorce, Mr. Calhern married Miss Julia Hoyt.

Aware of Mr. Calhern's somewhat rapid succession of spouses, Miss Chase sent Miss Hoyt a box of her calling cards, neatly engraved, "Mrs. Louis Calhern" with the accompanying note:

"Dear Julia: I hope these reach you in time."

A lady, who had just had an artificial grotto built in her garden, was displaying its beauties to Doctor Johnson.

"Would it not be," she asked, "a pretty, cool habitation in summer, Mr. Johnson?"

"I think it would, madam," replied the Doctor, "for a toad."



## HUMOROUS ANECDOTES

Madame Bizet, the widow of the composer of *Carmen*, was a woman renowned for her wit. A friend was speaking of an actress once famed for her statuesque beauty but now showing her years.

"She is no longer a statue," commented Madame Bizet, "but a group."



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